

State of Washington
Joint Legislative Audit and
Review Committee

Department of Corrections Performance Audit

Report 98-3

August 3, 1998

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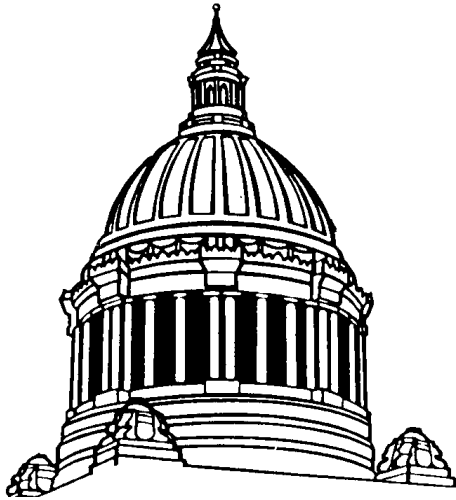


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The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee**

Established by Chapter 44.28 RCW, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (formerly the Legislative Budget Committee) provides oversight of state funded programs and activities. As a joint, bipartisan legislative committee, membership consists of eight senators and eight representatives equally divided between the two major political parties.

Under the direction of the Legislative Auditor, committee staff conduct performance audits, program evaluations, sunset reviews, and other types of policy and fiscal studies. Study reports typically focus on the efficiency and effectiveness of agency operations, impact of state programs, and compliance with legislative intent. As appropriate, recommendations to correct identified problem areas are included. The Legislative Auditor also has responsibility for facilitating implementation of effective performance measurement throughout state government.

The JLARC generally meets on a monthly basis during the interim between legislative sessions. It adopts study reports, recommends action to the legislature and the executive branch, sponsors legislation, and reviews the status of implementing recommendations.



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PERFORMANCE AUDIT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Summary

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee's (JLARC) performance audit of the Department of Corrections (DOC) focused on issues of efficiency, legislative compliance, and effectiveness in many of the agency's major areas of responsibility. Eight recommendations are made to address audit concerns identified in the report and to maximize the impact of current department initiatives.

The audit team found DOC has a positive performance record in many cases, and has initiatives underway that may further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operations. The major problem areas for DOC identified in this audit are: 1) lack of a strategic approach and oversight for offender programming and associated resources; and 2) the absence of management data in some key areas which raises doubts about whether DOC can effectively track its performance.

The audit team also lays out expectations for DOC's staffing model, which is under development, and identifies opportunities to gain at least \$641,000 in annual efficiencies in food services at institutions.

This summary discusses the findings in the context of the audit objectives to look at DOC's record on legislative compliance, efficiency and effectiveness. The following chapters present the findings, conclusions, and recommendations associated with each functional area reviewed, i.e., performance measures, institutional staffing and purchasing, community supervision, and offender programming.

Overview

EFFICIENCY

DOC has become relatively more efficient as it has experienced substantial growth in the number of inmates and community offenders under its jurisdiction. Staffing costs per inmate for institutions are going down, and the cost per unit for community supervision has been relatively stable. A review of efficiency in non-labor variable costs shows a similar trend.

Trends are good

DOC is also working on many initiatives that have the potential to save money or to improve the cost-effectiveness of operations. In response to JLARC audit findings released in December 1997, the Educational Services Section will begin including provider cost and service comparisons in its next contracting and budget cycle. Another effort is the development of a non-custody-staffing model that would provide for more accountability, and also has the potential for increasing efficiency. To ensure that the staffing model depicts a cost-effective staffing level, this audit includes a recommendation for DOC to identify workload drivers and use benchmark operations. The audit team also found that eliminating unjustified positions and purchasing practices in institutional food services, along with changing the way certain kitchens are used, would generate savings. We estimate that these actions could save between \$641,000 and \$779,000 per year.

Savings possible in food services

In the area of community supervision, significant changes have occurred in the way DOC classifies and manages offenders, along with the assumptions used to project resources needed to handle workload. The fiscal impact of these changes is not yet known, but since there is more discretion in the new system, it will be important for DOC to be accountable to the legislature for workload projections. This report includes a recommendation that focuses on the need for DOC to make its workload and fiscal assumptions accessible and maintain the necessary data for future accountability.

COMPLIANCE

DOC's record shows compliance with the specific legislative mandates we selected for review. The Chemical Dependency and Sex Offender Treatment Programs were implemented as directed by the legislature. Correctional industry employment has increased, exceeding the legislatively set targets. DOC has also focused its educational resources on basic skills training and increased its assessments of inmates. However, data to confirm actions taken on educational programming was not readily available and had to be compiled, with some difficulty, for this audit.

Having accessible data to track DOC's compliance with statutes was also a problem in the area of community supervision. We are unable to comment on whether community corrections officers are adequately enforcing conditions of sentencing, because "adequate enforcement" is seen as a discretionary concept in community supervision. Also, data on what actions have actually been taken is generally inaccessible or sometimes missing. The audit team makes a recommendation that DOC establish a means for tracking how well conditions are enforced.

EFFECTIVENESS

There are many different ways to look at effectiveness in a correctional agency. Maintaining public and staff safety by incarcerating offenders in a controlled setting is one expectation of DOC. Common correctional performance measures, such as escape rates and staff days lost due to injuries show declining trends, which reflect positively on DOC's operations. Operational outcomes, such as the level of idleness in a prison system, are another effectiveness measure often used for correctional settings. In that regard, the audit team found DOC is generally meeting its target of keeping offenders occupied 30 hours per week.

This report also discusses some positive initiatives in community supervision that have the potential for increasing DOC's impact. These initiatives include revision of the classification system and updating of DOC's system of weighting workload and projecting resources. By better aligning resources

Record positive
but . . .

. . . some data
inaccessible

Performance
good in
traditional
measures

with offender needs and risk, supervision activities will be more focused on areas most critical to protecting public safety. DOC is also trying to target offender characteristics/factors that recent research suggests is related to criminal behavior. How well that approach will work within community supervision is not yet known.

Having an impact on the future criminal behavior of offenders is an outcome measure that is often expected of correctional systems. However, the degree to which a correctional system is independently responsible for recidivism, apart from sentencing practices, local law enforcement efforts, and other influences, is heavily debated in the correctional literature.

Offender programs a concern

Offender programming is one area within correctional operations where there is often a goal of “rehabilitation” or “reducing recidivism.” The performance audit found that DOC has programs in areas that evaluation research indicates are promising; however, neither the auditors nor the department know whether Washington’s specific programs are having an impact. We found that few of DOC’s programs for offenders have been evaluated for their impact. The use of research, the conducting of evaluations, and the setting of research priorities appears to be ad hoc. In a few cases, research was done during the program planning phase, and the chosen program design was consistently implemented throughout the system. However, other programs exist that have multiple designs and no record of research being done.

Overall, the audit team concludes that DOC lacks a systemwide strategic approach to offender programming and research. These problems raise doubts about how well DOC “makes wise investments in offender rehabilitation programming” as directed by statute. DOC’s revised mission statement identifies the need “to create programs and practices consistent with research” and “to direct resources towards activities proven to work.” How this will be done is not yet obvious. Three recommendations are made by the audit team to focus on problems associated with offender programming.

Lacking a strategic approach

Finally, DOC’s strategic plan and performance measurement system was evaluated against elements necessary for a good

plan. The comparison showed DOC's current plan has weak links between goals and objectives, and problems with its selected performance measures. DOC is aware of these weaknesses, and they are planning a significant revision of the plan this year so that goals, objectives, and measures will better reflect their performance. To ensure that specific problems identified in the audit are addressed, a recommendation is included in the audit report detailing what elements need to be improved as part of DOC's new efforts.

The chapters in this report present the audit findings in more detail and are organized by functional responsibilities: performance measurement, institutional support services and purchasing, community supervision of offenders, and offender programming. Audit recommendations can be found at the end of each applicable chapter as well as in a list following this summary.

AGENCY RESPONSE

We have shared the report with the Department of Corrections and the Office of Financial Management. They have submitted responses, which generally concur with the auditor's recommendations. The agencies' comments are attached as Appendix 2.

**DOC and OFM
concur**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

JLARC staff members Beth Keating, Elizabeth DuBois, Heather Moss, and Kendra Dahlen conducted this study, with additional staff assistance from Valerie Whitener and Carol Webster. Ron Perry and Bob Thomas served as supervisors.

We wish to thank Kim Lake and Kathleen Nolte of Sterling and Associates, and Doris MacKenzie and Laura Hickman from the Evaluation and Research Center in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Maryland, who provided reviews of DOC's information technology and evaluation research, respectively, under contract with JLARC.

We appreciate the considerable assistance and full cooperation we received from the Department of Corrections staff. Finally, we wish to thank Margaret Vonheeder, Deputy Secretary, Office of Administrative Services, who served as the agency liaison for this audit.

Ron Perry
Acting Legislative Auditor

On August 3, 1998, this report was approved by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee and its distribution authorized.

Representative Cathy McMorris
Chair

RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Recommendation 1

In its updated plan, the Department of Corrections should:

- Develop objectives that will clearly further departmentwide goals.
- Choose performance measures that will accurately inform the legislature and the Department of Corrections of progress made towards each objective.
- Develop a reliable performance measurement system that is used for decision-making.

Legislation Required:	None
Fiscal Impact:	None
Completion Date:	December 31, 1998

Recommendation 2

The Department of Corrections should incorporate the elements identified in this report to ensure its non-custody staffing model represents cost-effective benchmarks. The elements include:

- Identifying workload drivers for each function;
- Utilizing internal benchmark operations; and
- Justifying variations from the model.

Legislation Required:	None
Fiscal Impact:	Should achieve efficiencies but cannot be estimated as yet.
Completion Date:	June 30, 1999

Recommendation 3

The Department of Corrections should improve efficiencies in Food Services by:

- Eliminating baking operations that are not cost-effective;
- Considering converting regular institutional kitchens into “rethermalization” kitchens, particularly the one at Twin Rivers Corrections Center; and
- Eliminating the added cost of institutions purchasing from the Department of Correctional Industries Food Factory Program.

Legislation Required:	None
Fiscal Impact:	Between \$641,000 and \$779,000 in annual savings
Completion Date:	June 30, 1999

Recommendation 4

In order to determine the Department of Corrections performance in carrying out its primary responsibility, the Department shall establish a means for tracking whether conditions of sentencing are being adequately enforced and met for offenders on community supervision.

Legislation Required:	None
Fiscal Impact:	None
Completion Date:	Initial steps by December 31, 1998

Recommendation 5

To provide for future accountability, the Department of Corrections needs to make available to the legislature workload and budget assumptions associated with community supervision and should maintain key historical information.

Legislation Required:	None
Fiscal Impact:	None
Completion Date:	Beginning FY1998

Recommendation 6

The Department of Corrections should “invest wisely in effective offender rehabilitation programs” as legislatively directed. It should do this by developing internal methods of addressing, at a minimum, the limitations listed below that prevent it from fulfilling this mandate:

- Knowing what program offerings and needs exist throughout the system, in order to ensure that key curriculums are consistent and needs are prioritized and met;
- Ensuring that programs offered are consistent with Department of Corrections offender programming goals and the strategic plan, and have methods and criteria for evaluating their success;
- Comparing program performance to relative costs;
- Ensuring that programs, especially those requiring a major investment of resources, are evaluated for their performance and effectiveness; and
- Reviewing research to determine if programs proven to be effective are, or are not, being offered at Department of Corrections.

Legislation Required:	None
Fiscal Impact:	None
Completion Date:	June 30, 1999

Recommendation 7

The Department of Corrections should address the fiscal and operational oversight issues identified in this report by:

- Establishing cost standards for educational programs, and allocating resources based on need and DOC programming objectives.

- Establishing service delivery expectations for educational providers and conducting contract and service reviews as an ongoing part of the budget process.
- Establishing standard programming and reporting requirements that will produce valid and reliable data on offender participation and costs.

Legislation Required: No
Fiscal Impact: None
Completion Date: June 30, 1999

Recommendation 8

The Department of Corrections should complete a program review of its Chemical Dependency Treatment Program to assess the program's purpose, management oversight, and operational efficiency, and report the findings to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee.

Legislation Required: None
Fiscal Impact: None
Completion Date: December 31, 1998

INTRODUCTION

Chapter One

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) sought input from the legislature on its priorities for JLARC studies in the fall of 1997. As a result, several members asked for reviews of various aspects of the Department of Corrections (DOC). Due to the level of interest and the broad nature of the requests that were made, the JLARC Executive Committee approved a project proposal to conduct a performance audit of the full department.

Presented in this report are the findings, conclusions and resulting recommendations from that audit.

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

According to Government Auditing Standards, general performance audits can include many objectives. Examples of such objectives are whether programs are achieving their desired results or benefits as intended by the legislature, whether they are effective, whether they are using their resources efficiently, and whether they are in compliance with significant laws. In an agency as large as the DOC, there are dozens of programs and sub-programs that could have been targeted in this audit.

In determining the focus of this performance audit, we did not want to duplicate previous work done by the committee on DOC's capital planning and the feasibility of privatizing operations. We also surveyed other states to see if there were models available on conducting broad performance audits of correctional systems.

Overview

Focus was on
efficiency,
effectiveness
and
compliance

Capital planning and privatization

Previous JLARC Audits of DOC

In 1993, JLARC conducted an audit of the DOC Capacity Planning and Implementation.¹ In its report, JLARC recognized that DOC had a good capacity planning process. JLARC staff also made recommendations for improvement and savings from capital investments and changes in operations. In a follow-up last fall, JLARC staff found DOC has pursued many of the specific projects identified by the committee and has applied the approach and tools that were developed by the audit team.

At its January 1998 meeting, staff briefed the committee on the significant impacts of the report. By implementing the JLARC recommendations, we estimate that DOC will generate over \$12 million in savings next biennium, exceeding our original audit estimates.

In 1995, JLARC produced a feasibility study on privatizing state prisons.² Included in the study are methods and guidelines for the state to follow in the event that a policy decision is made to privatize prisons. The report also addresses the legislature's questions about possible legal constraints to privatization and about potential savings.

Audits of Correctional Systems in Other States

In the scoping stage of this audit, we contacted the other 49 states to see if performance audits had been done on their respective state systems. We found that few performance audits have been done at the agency level and those that we obtained copies of did not provide us with useful models. Each state has its own issues to address and the reports usually focused on management issues or issues of organizational structure. Where there were comparisons to other states in these performance audits, the analysis was limited and not useful for Washington's audit.

Systemwide audits not common

¹ Report 94-1.

² Report 96-2.

Determining Objectives

In order to develop focused objectives, we tried to determine which areas were of most interest to the legislature and also which areas in DOC were of significant risk for potential inefficiencies or policy concerns.

Through this process, we identified several areas to be included in the performance audit. It was also determined whether each area would be audited for either efficiency, effectiveness, or compliance with statute; or a combination of these issues.

Below is a summary of what is covered in this audit. The formal scope and objectives for the audit and additional detail can be found in Appendix A.

Major Areas Targeted in the Audit

Efficiency issues:

- Staffing costs for non-custody positions in insitutions
- Budget growth in community supervision
- Fiscal oversight of educational contracts

Effectiveness issues:

- Traditional performance measures (such as escapes)
- Reducing idleness through work and education programs
- Focusing on factors that promote successful completion of community supervision
- The origin, purpose, and outcomes of offender programs
- A comparison between DOC's offender programs and what is known nationally about effective programming

Compliance issues:

- Actions taken as a result of recent legislation on offender work and education programming
- Implementation of previous JLARC recommendations
- Enforcement of court orders for offenders under supervision in the community

The Department's Restructure

The audit work was complicated by the fact that DOC is undergoing a major restructure which began in July 1997 and still continues.

According to DOC, the purpose of the restructure is to have “an organizational structure that more efficiently emphasizes collaborative partnerships, both internally and externally, supports meeting [DOC’s] vision and mission consistent with resource limits.”³ The impact of this has been significant as personnel and responsibilities have shifted and the Department rethinks some of the ways in which it operates.⁴

**Audit period
through FY
1997**

As detailed in the following chapters, most of the audit focused on DOC’s performance up to June 1997, the point at which DOC redefined its mission and began its restructure. If an audit concern was identified, we also tried to determine if any of the restructure plans or other department initiatives might address those concerns. In some areas, such as institutional staffing, DOC is already taking action. In other areas, particularly offender programming, DOC’s current efforts are not likely to address the issues raised in this report. The impact of the restructure on audit findings is discussed in each chapter as the findings are presented.

³ June 30, 1997, Memo from Secretary Joseph Lehman to DOC employees regarding the restructure.

⁴ Organizationally, the restructure reduces what was previously six divisions into two major divisions with regional offices. This consolidation effectively combines, at the regional level, management positions above prison superintendents and above the office supervisor levels for community field offices. In some cases, responsibilities and positions previously located in headquarters are now in the regional offices.

ORGANIZATION OF REPORT

Chapter 2 covers basic background on DOC and its track record on traditional performance measures along with its strategic planning efforts. Chapter 3 discusses our review of institutional staffing analyses, DOC purchasing practices, and identifies opportunities for efficiencies. Chapter 4 covers the caseload growth, budget history, and compliance issues related to community supervision, along with a discussion of changes that are taking place in that program. And finally, Chapter 5 discusses our review of offender programming; how well DOC has done in developing a strategic approach and providing fiscal and management controls; and making use of the available research on the effectiveness of programming. Recommendations, as appropriate to each topic, appear at the end of the chapters.

OVERVIEW OF DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Chapter Two

In this chapter, we provide background information on DOC and a review of its performance on selected and traditional correctional performance measures. When analyzed over time and compared to other states, DOC's overall performance was favorable. As part of this study, we also reviewed DOC's strategic plan and performance measurement system to see if they had been effectively implemented. We found that while the documents themselves meet basic legislative mandates and Office of Financial Management (OFM) structural requirements, there is a lack of continuity between the objectives and overall goals, and a lack of appropriate outcome measures. This will limit DOC's ability to effectively direct its efforts and measure progress toward its mission and goals. Recommendations for DOC to address these issues are presented at the end of the chapter.

BACKGROUND

The Department of Corrections became an independent agency in 1981 when its functions were separated from those of the Department of Social and Health Services. Its primary statutory responsibilities are to ensure the safety of the public, staff, and inmates, and to punish offenders for their crimes. Additionally, the legislature intends the corrections system to positively impact offenders and discourage recidivism.¹ This is to be accomplished in part by providing offenders with programming intended to reduce recidivism and requiring

Overview

¹ RCW 72.09.

offenders to be productively occupied during their incarceration. Finally, DOC is mandated to operate the corrections system in as cost-effective a manner as possible.

Offender population increasing

The number of offenders incarcerated by the state has grown 86 percent over the last decade. Consequently, DOC's expenditures have also been increasing. DOC's fiscal year budget more than doubled over the last 10 years, from \$170 million in FY 1987 to \$391 million in FY 1997. In FY 1997, approximately 76 percent of DOC's budget was spent on housing inmates, including prison operations and maintenance. Expenditures for Community Supervision made up 12 percent, and the remaining 12 percent consisted of headquarters, correctional industries, and revolving fund costs. DOC currently operates 8 main prisons, 5 camps, 2 pre-release facilities, and 16 work-training release sites. It also operates over 70 community supervision offices statewide, supervising approximately 52,000 offenders.

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

In addition to the in-depth program-specific analysis done within this performance audit, we wanted to review DOC's overall performance in meeting its basic mandates as a corrections agency. To do this, we conducted a high level review of DOC's performance using traditional performance measures common to the field of corrections. We identified these traditional measures by reviewing the research literature on corrections performance measurement, reading the strategic plans of other states' corrections agencies, and researching DOC's basic legislative intent. We then evaluated DOC's performance in these areas by looking at internal trends and also by comparing DOC to other states in selected areas. Exhibit 1 below provides a list of the selected measures.

Traditional measures reviewed

Exhibit 1 Corrections Performance Measures

✓ Inmate Escapes	✓ Court Injunctions
✓ Prison Assaults	✓ Employee L&I Claims
✓ Cost of Incarceration	✓ Employee Turnover
✓ Tort Liability	

Performance on Traditional Measures

Our review of the selected traditional corrections performance measures found that DOC is tracking all of them and, for the most part, had historical data readily available. DOC's overall performance in these selected areas shows positive trends and compares relatively favorably to other states. In most of the areas where performance has not been as positive, DOC was typically aware of the problem and had taken some sort of action.

**Overall
performance
positive**

Inmate Escapes

Our analysis of inmate escapes shows that rates declined sharply for all security levels between 1986 and 1996, and the overall rate dropped 70 percent. In 1997, there was a slight increase in the escape rates from minimum security and work release facilities. Following a limited comparison of Washington's escape rates to those of other comparable states,² we found that Washington's escape rates are below average for minimum security and work release facilities and are about average for maximum and medium security.

DOC recently organized a work group to study minimum security escapes. Between 1990 and 1997, 47 percent of the escapees had Immigration and Naturalization Service detainees,³ and 39 percent of the escapees were on outside work crews when they escaped. As a result, the work group has made a series of recommendations to senior management to address classification and work crew assignment issues that may be contributing to escapes.

**DOC studying
minimum
security
escapes**

In our study, we also reviewed historical trends on offender recapture rates. Our review found that rates have either improved or remained the same for all security levels except for minimum security. In minimum security, recapture rates have declined by over 30 percent in the last ten years. DOC was not

² Based on Corrections Yearbook information. Other states selected for comparison based on similar populations and custody structure.

³ These detainees are confirmed or suspected of being illegal aliens.

aware of this decline and, as of the date of this report, had no specific plans to address this issue.⁴

Prison Assaults

As a measure of DOC's ability to maintain safety within its facilities, we looked at the trends in offender-offender and offender-staff assaults. Our analysis shows an 8 percent decrease in overall assault rates between fiscal years 1996 and 1997. However, accurate data prior to 1996 is not available due to a change in reporting definitions. This prevented us from looking at a longer history of assaults. New definitions provide more discrete information about assault types, and it appears that future data will be both reliable and more informative.

Historical
assault data
limited

Cost of Incarceration

Over the last several years the overall cost-per-inmate has decreased in prison facilities and has remained relatively steady in community supervision on a per-unit basis. The reductions in cost-per-prison bed are due, in large part, to DOC successfully integrating their capital plans with the analyses and recommendations made in JLARC's 1993 audit of DOC's capital planning.

Declining
costs per
inmate

Previous JLARC studies have attempted to compare DOC's cost per bed with reported "national averages" but found that due to how various states budget for correctional operations, cost figures on other states are often not comparable to Washington. Previous JLARC analysis comparing Washington with selected states identified that inefficient facility design contributed to Washington having higher custody costs per bed. Auditors have also identified previously that Washington is higher than selected states in the following cost centers: medical, administration and business, maintenance, food service and classification. Current department initiatives in the first three categories already have brought down, or are expected to bring down, those costs. Recommendations for making food services more efficient are made in chapter 3 of this report.

⁴ It is important to note that responsibility for recapturing inmates lies with local law enforcement jurisdictions as well as DOC.

Tort Liability

Our review of successful tort liability claims against DOC found that the claim types with the highest cost have been for wrongful death, civil rights, personal injury, and bodily injury.⁵ Our analysis found that the overall cost and number of civil rights and personal injury claims rose during the 1980s, and have been declining since the early 1990s. There have been large increases in wrongful death and bodily injury suit awards in recent years; however, very few of these cases occur so it is not possible to identify a specific pattern.

DOC has a Central Risk Management Office charged with monitoring tort claims and overseeing loss prevention and control programs. Current initiatives include developing a classification tool to more effectively screen offenders' risk levels before approving them for transfer to community supervision. This is intended to reduce the chance of threats to public safety and wrongful death suits. Additionally, the Department is using pre-employment screening and sexual harassment training to reduce the risk of civil rights violations and possible suits.

Court Injunctions

Our review of the court injunctions currently in effect in DOC's prisons found that they are low in number and limited in scope. Of the three in effect, two of them apply to individual institutions.⁶ The scope of the third injunction is system-wide, but applies only to a small population of hearing-impaired inmates.⁷ Our review found that when compared to the other states within the US District Court's Ninth Circuit, Washington compares favorably. Several other states have injunctions in effect in most of the facilities in their prison systems. Others have a number similar to that of Washington.⁸ Oregon and Idaho have fewer.

**Number and
scope are
limited**

⁵ Personal Property Claims are by far the highest in number; however, the individual claim amounts are low.

⁶ Hoptowit v. Dixie Lee Ray (1983); Hallett v. Payne (1995).

⁷ Duffy v. Riveland (1998).

⁸ 1997 Corrections Yearbook.

Employee L&I Claims

Total costs
declining

As a measurement of both safety and cost-reduction efforts, we reviewed recent trends in employee injury claims. L&I data shows that the number of days lost per employee claim have declined. Between fiscal years 1994 and 1997, the average number of days lost per claim declined by 46 percent. Another way of measuring claim activity is through a legislatively authorized program which reimburses staff for sick leave used should they be assaulted by an inmate and forced to miss work.⁹ DOC data shows that the total reimbursement costs for these claims dropped 87 percent over the last four years.

Correctional Officer Turnover

Rate slightly
increasing

The last measure we looked at was the employment turnover rate for Corrections Officers. These are the uniformed line staff who have the most direct contact with inmates and make up nearly 60 percent of prison staff. This measure was chosen as an overall reflection of DOC's management and working environment. DOC numbers show there was a sharp decline from 11 to 6 percent in the early 1990s, but there has been a slight but steady increase between fiscal years 1993 and 1997. DOC is aware of this trend, and during the last few years it made changes to the pay scale and job descriptions to encourage retention. It is important to note the slight rise in turnover rates could be due to the current competitive job market in the Puget Sound area, which can make employee retention more difficult. DOC compares very well when compared to Corrections Officer turnover in other states. Washington's 1996 turnover rate was about 7 percent, well below the national average of 14 percent.¹⁰

DOC's Strategic Plan and Performance Measurement Process

Another objective of our audit was to review the DOC's strategic plan and performance measurement process and to evaluate it

⁹ RCW 72.09.240.

¹⁰ 1997 Corrections Yearbook. 1996 was the most recent year for which data was available. Washington's 1997 correctional officer turnover rate was 8 percent.

for its ability to effectively provide relevant and reliable information on DOC's efforts to meet goals and fulfill its mission. Our objectives were to determine:

- If the plan and measurement system have all of the legislatively-mandated and OFM required elements.
- If DOC's selection of goals and objectives are appropriate to, and representative of, its mission.
- If the objectives and performance measures included in the plan will provide good, reliable information on DOC's progress toward meeting its goals and mission.
- If management is using the plan and performance measurement system as planning tools.

We selected these objectives based on a review of OFM's budget instructions, the US General Accounting Office's (GAO) guidelines for developing and evaluating performance measures,¹¹ and legislative mandates.¹²

A strategic plan and performance measurement system is intended to focus agency efforts on the achievement of its overall mission and goals. Objectives are then established to forward these goals. Performance measures track an agency's progress toward meeting its goals and objectives. A logical, concrete connection between goals, objectives, and performance measures is therefore critical to ensuring that agency efforts are focused on achieving goals and fulfilling its mission. The performance measurement system is needed to serve as a tool for reviewing and communicating departmentwide performance results.

**Logical
connections are
critical**

Mandates and Required Elements

Our review found that DOC has designed and implemented a strategic planning and performance measurement system. As required by OFM, all of the basic required elements of the

¹¹ GAO sources: *Agencies Strategic Plans Under GPRA: Key Questions to Facilitate Congressional Review*; *Managing for Results: Critical Issues for Improving Federal Agencies' Strategic Plans*.

¹² RCW 43.88.090 Sections 2-4.

Plan compares well to other states . . .

system are in place, including a mission, goals, objectives, and performance measures. In addition, we compared DOC's plan and measures to those of other state corrections departments. Only 14 other states had developed plans with performance measures, and there was a wide variation in their quality. Many of the plans would not meet the basic structural requirements described above. Washington's DOC is clearly further along in the development process than other states.

Goals and Objectives

A review of DOC's goals shows that they appear to be appropriately related to the agency's mission and representative of DOC's wide range of activities. However, there are unclear relationships between some of the objectives and their overall goals. For example, some objectives are stated at such a detailed program level that it is not clear how they will contribute to the broader overall goal.

Performance Measures and System

. . . however, some relationships unclear

Many of the performance measures appear to have no direct relationship to the program objectives or outcomes they are intended to measure. From our review, it appears that the objectives and measures were not strategically developed as key indicators of department efforts, but instead are program-specific objectives and data that are already being tracked. This lack of a clear connection between objectives, measures, and their respective goals raises concerns that performance data being currently collected will not actually enable DOC to strategically evaluate and demonstrate progress toward its goals.

In terms of how the performance measurement information is being used, our review found that in some cases individual program managers are collecting this data and using it in their program management. For example, the Education Services section recently changed its performance measures to be more outcome-oriented. It will be using data collected during this next year to measure the ability of the basic skills programs to meet the assessed educational needs of offenders.

However, it appears that the measurement data is not being used centrally to monitor systemwide performance and program results. Our review found that the central measurement tracking system was out of date. For example, as of March 1998, FY 1997 data had not yet been added. Although the information was available directly from the program managers, it was not easily, or centrally accessible.

Data not
strategically
used

CONCLUSION

In summary, DOC's performance on traditional corrections performance measures was positive. Trends over time showed improvement, and DOC compared relatively favorably to other states. Data on all of the measures we selected was being tracked and monitored.

Strategic planning and performance measurement have been required of state agencies since 1996. As a fairly new mandate, agencies have been struggling with producing good plans – and DOC is no exception. Improvement in DOC's plan and performance measurement system is needed if it is to assist the Department with the achievement of its mission and inform the legislature of progress toward the agency goals. DOC is aware of these issues and is in the process of developing a new departmentwide strategic planning process intended to address them. To insure continuing progress, the following recommendation is made.

Continuing
progress
needed

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1

In its updated plan, the Department of Corrections should:

- ***Develop objectives that will clearly further departmentwide goals.***
- ***Choose performance measures that will accurately inform the legislature and the Department of Corrections of progress made toward each objective.***
- ***Develop a reliable performance measurement system that is used for decision-making.***

INSTITUTIONAL STAFFING AND PURCHASING

Chapter Three

In this section of the audit report we provide a review of the non-custody staffing and non-labor costs of DOC's 15 institutions. In our review we found that overall costs per inmate are declining, but DOC still has opportunities to achieve savings in staffing and non-labor costs. The Department is in the process of developing a non-custody staffing model. This section provides information on DOC's progress and JLARC's expectations for the model.

Further, this section explores staffing and non-labor costs in Food Services. The audit team found DOC could save between \$641,000 and \$779,000 in annual staff costs by identifying and applying "best practices." The savings would result from changing the use of secondary kitchens at major institutions, eliminating unjustified positions, and eliminating the cost increase associated with Food Factory purchases.

INTRODUCTION

In FY 1997, the state of Washington had the capacity to house over 11,000 inmates in eight major institutions, five camps, and two pre-release facilities.¹ Major institutions have multiple custody level housing, camps are minimum facilities that emphasize work crews, and pre-release facilities prepare inmates for their release. These facilities comprise

¹ DOC regularly operates its institutions with a higher number of inmates than the rated capacity indicates. The Average Daily Population (ADP) for FY 1997 was higher than the capacity noted here.

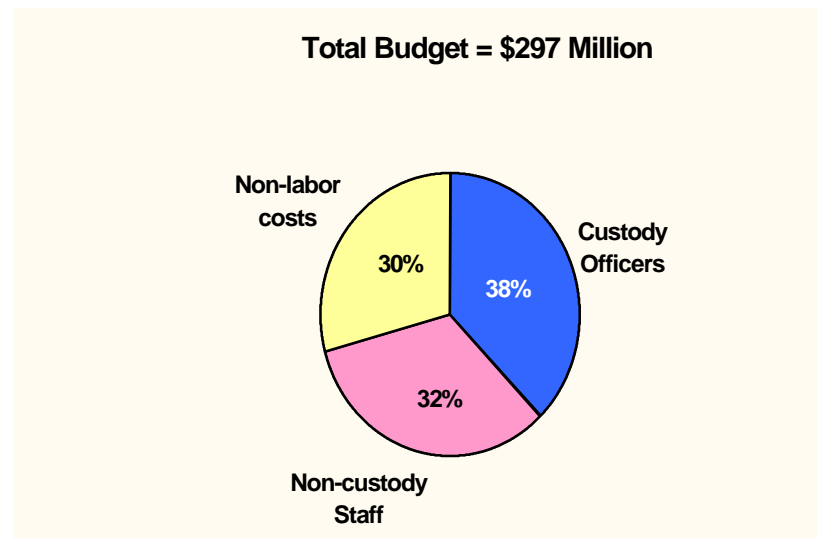
Overview

approximately 76 percent or \$297 million of DOC's total operating budget of \$391 million for FY 1997.

Shown below are the major cost centers for a Washington State institution.

Exhibit 2
Operating Budget for Institutions, FY 1997

70% of
budget is
labor



Source: JLARC analysis of DOC Budget figures.

As shown above, 70 percent of the institutions' total budget goes to staffing. Of that, just over half is for custody officers, and the rest is for institutional and bed services, such as business functions, food service, laundry, recreation, unit operations, and plant maintenance. Non-labor costs, which include food products, medical and dental supplies, education contracts, and utilities, comprise the remaining 30 percent of the budget.

Cost per Inmate Varies

While \$23,431 is the average annual cost of housing an inmate in FY 1997, expenditures ranged from \$16,571 to \$35,881 for the 15 facilities.² From previous JLARC audits of DOC, we know that security levels of the facilities, along with a prison's size and design, greatly influence the total cost per bed. In 1994,

² Total per inmate costs provided by DOC.

JLARC analyzed these factors and made recommendations for cost-savings.³

JLARC also analyzed the model DOC uses to determine custody staffing levels and found it to be a cost-effective tool.⁴ JLARC had not, however, focused on the reasons why non-uniform staffing levels or purchasing practices varied between institutions.

Scope of the Cost Analysis

During our pre-audit phase, the audit team found legislative members continue to be concerned about the cost per bed in Washington and the fact that DOC does not have a staffing model for positions other than custody. Therefore, we focused the scope of this analysis on major areas of non-custody staffing and purchasing expenditures.

The major objectives for this part of the audit were to:

- Analyze the institutions' non-custody staffing costs in order to identify internal and external benchmarks;
- Evaluate the Department's development of a staffing model for non-custody staff;
- Assess the Department's purchasing costs and practices.

This chapter will cover the major audit findings as they relate to non-custody staffing and non-labor costs of the institutional budget.

- Cost per bed trends;⁵

Analysis focused on non-custody staffing

³ "Department of Corrections Capacity Planning and Implementation," Report 94-1.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Much of the analysis in this chapter is based on the operational capacity of an institution, as indicated by costs "per bed." Most institutions operate at a level higher than their operational capacity. However, their actual population, the Average Daily Population (ADP), fluctuates to such an extent that it is difficult to use for comparison purposes. "Per inmate" costs generally indicate total costs divided by the ADP, and will usually be lower than "per bed" costs.

- Staffing levels in other states;
- Staffing model development efforts in Washington;
- Expectations for the Department's staffing model;
- Analysis of Food Services staffing; and
- Review of purchasing trends and initiatives.

COST PER BED TRENDS

As the state's inmate population grows, DOC must expand current facilities or build new ones. As a result of previous JLARC recommendations and DOC initiatives, the Department has focused its expansion efforts on the most economical strategies. Each of the seven institutions that grew, or is growing⁶, in capacity over the past biennium has reduced non-custody staffing costs as follows:

Exhibit 3
Non-custody Staffing Costs for Expanding Institutions

Per bed
labor
costs are
declining

Institution	FY97		FY99		% Change in \$ Per Bed
	Capacity	\$ Per Bed	Planned Capacity	\$ Per Bed	
Larch CC	134	\$7,789	400	\$5,679	-27%
Tacoma Pre-Release	140	\$9,576	400	\$5,746	-40%
Cedar Creek CC	246	\$6,855	400	\$5,802	-15%
WA CC for Women	488	\$16,381	680	\$12,489	-24%
WA State Reformatory	692	\$10,203	1092	\$8,010	-21%
Washington CC	1145	\$9,396	1205	\$9,092	-3%
McNeil Island CC	1534	\$10,067	1571	\$9,927	-1%

Source: JLARC analysis.

While we did find a general trend of larger institutions being more efficient (lower cost per bed), our initial analysis showed that size of an institution is not the only reason why overall non-

⁶ Tacoma Pre-Release (TPR) was originally scheduled to open its expanded facility sometime in the summer of 1999. However, site selection problems have delayed the project until January 2000. The staffing projections provided for this analysis are still valid.

custody staffing costs vary.⁷ In order to understand what causes the per bed cost differences, we examined staffing levels between institutions at the functional level. Our analysis focused on four major functional areas, which comprise 54 percent of total non-custody staffing:

- Business and Administration
- Food Services
- Maintenance
- Inmate Services (e.g., laundry, library, grievance, recreation)

In our analysis at the functional level, we analyzed staffing patterns in other states' staffing models and reviewed DOC's initial draft of a staffing model. We also attempted to identify cost drivers and study benchmark operations within DOC.

CORRECTIONAL STAFFING MODELS IN OTHER STATES

In order to comment on DOC's staffing model, we reviewed models from other jurisdictions and analyzed some of the current staffing patterns. Through a national survey, the audit team was able to locate only three other jurisdictions (two states and the Federal Bureau of Prisons) that use any type of non-custody staffing model. Additional states have attempted to conduct formal analyses of staffing levels at institutions, but those efforts have not resulted in models.

Pennsylvania and Missouri are the two other states we found that use some type of staffing model. The Pennsylvania model is the most comprehensive and can be a source of ideas for Washington's DOC. Some of its useful features are that it identifies workload drivers, addresses legal restrictions, and sets specific standards. The Missouri model is a high-level guide

**Few states
have models**

⁷ A single variate regression using capacity as the independent variable and non-custody staffing costs per bed as the dependent variable resulted in an R-square of 0.53.

that is actually one component of an overall staffing study that ultimately recommended an increase in FTEs.

External comparisons not possible

General staffing data was also collected from other states in order to determine if there were more cost-effective operations that could be transferable to Washington. However, the data provided by other states was generally incomplete so comparisons to DOC were not possible. Somewhat better data was obtained from the state of Oregon, which operates a more centralized administrative and business structure than DOC. Previous comparisons between Washington and Oregon by JLARC have discussed how most of Oregon's prisons are located along the I-5 corridor making centralization more feasible. There are additional differences in technology and in the organization of responsibilities in Oregon that complicate a comparison. For example, the Oregon Department of Administrative Services handles the payroll for the entire state. Likewise, Oregon differs from Washington in that medical services are not paid for out of institutional budgets.

Due to the differences in operations between Washington institutions and those in other states, it is difficult to directly compare staffing levels as presented in a staffing model or in cost comparisons. However, what DOC can learn from staffing models is what the essential components of a staffing model are, as described later in this chapter.

NON-CUSTODY STAFFING MODEL

A staffing model is a tool that agencies can use to achieve continuity in operations and in costs between similar offices (or, in DOC's case, institutions). DOC currently applies a staffing model to its custody functions, which facilitates planning for capital and operational budgetary needs, ensuring adequate coverage for maximum public safety, and projecting custody staff needs for new or expanding institutions.

DOC's Recent Efforts

Amidst the substantial efforts that are being put into its reorganization, DOC is in the process of developing a non-custody staffing model for its pre-releases, camps, and major institutions. The goal is to create a model that will establish

DOC is developing a non-custody staffing model

efficient and appropriate levels of staff at every functional level for each institution. DOC had previously created a non-custody staffing model (called the Fixed/Variable Model), but ultimately rejected its use because it called for an increase of 100 FTEs.

No significant additional work was done on a non-custody staffing model until this most recent effort began in the summer of 1997. The current model is being developed in a series of phases. DOC provided the audit team with a draft of "Phase 2" of this effort, which organized positions by functional responsibility to arrive at comparable categories. DOC expects to implement a model by late fall of 1998.

Currently, DOC is in the process of completing Phase 3 of the staffing model, in which it will attempt to set staffing standards for some functions. DOC will perform varying levels of analyses of each functional area, depending on its complexity. For example, a committee is working to determine what drives food service staffing, and a private contractor is conducting a workload analysis of business functions.

DOC's initiative to develop a non-custody staffing model is commendable, and we found that the process includes some good steps, i.e., developing comparable categories, reserving complex areas for further analysis. Some principles are discussed in the following section that would strengthen the resulting product and its acceptance by the legislature.

EXPECTATIONS FOR THE DOC NON-CUSTODY STAFFING MODEL

Using the models described earlier and our understanding of DOC operations as guidelines, the audit team has defined some additional expectations for what the DOC model should include and what it should achieve. DOC's model should:

Identify workload drivers by function. Workloads are driven by specific factors that may or may not be readily apparent. A sound staffing model should reflect the real drivers that impact staffing levels. For example, as we will describe below, we found that food services staffing levels are driven by differences in

operations, such as the number of serving lines and the number of kitchens.

Some cost differences cannot be explained

In another instance, we attempted to identify the variables that influence maintenance staffing between institutions – but could not. The obvious possibilities, such as age of institutions, size and number of buildings, security level, size of the campus, and major systems, explained only a fraction of the staffing level differences between institutions.⁸ Until recently, DOC's capital planning staff had not been involved in determining appropriate staffing levels for new or remodeled institutions. How maintenance staffing has been determined and justified is not clear.

Make use of internal benchmarks. Internal benchmarks are the most cost-effective and replicable examples of a program's or an agency's operations.

Emphasizing benchmarks is one way DOC can realize efficiencies within the staffing model. What the model should avoid is trying to “level the playing field” by staffing at average, rather than at the most efficient, levels. In the “Phase 2” document provided to JLARC, DOC identified initial standards for some functions. What the audit team has seen of DOC's Phase 3 report indicates that some standards have been revised to reflect more efficient levels.

DOC can use its own “best practices”

DOC has also initiated a comprehensive review of its business functions systemwide with the goal of improving operations and generating savings. This is an opportunity to make use of internal benchmarks as it moves some business functions out of institutions and into five regional offices. Savings from consolidation are expected, but how much is not yet known. Two examples of current regional operations suggest that savings may be substantial:

- Business functions at the pre-release facilities are almost entirely regionalized.

⁸ JLARC conducted a series of single variate regressions to isolate the three most influential variables, which were security level, gross square footage, and number of acres. When combined in a multivariate regression, however, these variables achieved an R-square of 0.43.

- Monroe Consolidated, which is the central structure for Twin Rivers Corrections Center (TRCC) and the Washington State Reformatory (WSR), already provides consolidated services for prisons similar in total capacity to those located in the Southwest region. However, Monroe Consolidated does it for \$260,000 less in annual staff costs.⁹

Justify variations from the model. Exceptions to any model can be expected, but the variance should be justified. DOC's staffing model should be clear in these cases.

For example, we found that much of the staffing differences between camps and pre-release facilities are due to additional programming and release paperwork at the pre-releases, but DOC cannot identify specifically which functions or how many FTEs represent this difference. Additionally, each institution may have specific unique programs it operates or populations it houses, and they must be able to identify what workload these add to standard operations. All of these differences should be explained and quantified in DOC's staffing model.

One of the most obvious cost differences between institutions is the Washington Corrections Center for Women and similar-sized male institutions. These cost differences have generally been attributed to running a single all-female facility which houses several high-cost programs that are otherwise spread out between male institutions, such as a reception unit and a residential mental health unit. There are, however, additional staffing differences for which there are no obvious explanations.

Food Services Staffing

The value of understanding workload drivers, internal benchmarks, and variations can be seen in the analysis the audit team applied to food service staffing. The approach we took was to identify the workload drivers, identify benchmark operations within the state, and then determine which efficient practices were transferable to other institutions.

⁹ This amount is derived from aligning exact positions between Monroe Consolidated and the institutions comprising the Southwest region. The difference is seven positions at a cost of \$260,000.

Variations
need to be
justified

Workload Drivers in Food Services

Through discussions with staff in the central menu planning office (the Combined Action Foodservice Economy, or CAFÉ) and institutional Business Managers and Food Service Managers, we identified several variables that drive food service staffing level differences:¹⁰

- Operational capacity (size of the institution);
- Number of serving lines;
- Number and type of kitchens (full kitchens or rethermalization kitchens);
- Amount of remote serving food preparation (bulk operations); and
- Number of trays.

Our analysis found that the most significant of these variables were operational capacity of the facility, number of serving lines, and number and type of kitchens.¹¹

Benchmark Food Service Operations

Using the overall cost per inmate and the significant variables indicated above, we were able to identify benchmark operations at the following facilities:

- Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW)
- Washington Corrections Center (WCC)
- Airway Heights Corrections Center (AHCC)

Examples of “best practices”

¹⁰ There are several other variables that drive workload, such as medical and religious diets, sack lunch preparation, and inmate labor availability. However, these drivers do not vary enough between institutions to explain any major differences in cost.

¹¹ These three variables combined in a multivariate regression result in an R-square of 0.797.

- Cedar Creek Corrections Center (CCCC)
- Larch Corrections Center (LCC)

These five institutions are cost-effective for different reasons, and each raises operational practices that can be adapted to other institutions. WCCW and WCC achieve efficiencies in how they use their kitchens, AHCC achieves efficiencies by purchasing prepared food, and CCCC and LCC are the most efficient camp kitchens primarily because they do not utilize in-house baking operations. All of these practices are adaptable to other institutions within DOC.

Kitchen Utilization

Both WCCW and WCC feed their entire populations from essentially one main kitchen. The additional “kitchens” at each facility (one at WCCW and three at WCC) operate as serving areas with little or no food preparation. This requires only minimal staffing at the smaller kitchens to supervise food reheating and serving, and cleanup. DOC is already capitalizing on this more efficient use of kitchens in its capital plans for expansion at Monroe Consolidated and for the new Stafford Creek Correctional Center. However, its application has not been explored in existing facilities.

As part of our analysis, we looked into the feasibility of using the kitchen at the WSR to prepare food for TRCC and to operate TRCC as a “rethermalization” kitchen. As part of the planning process for adding a 400-bed camp to WSR, DOC Capital Programs contracted with a private consultant in 1995 to study food service delivery options. The consultant found that the WSR main kitchen has “adequate kitchen/storage space to accommodate 2,000 plus beds, three meals per day.” The savings potential from this could range from \$233,000 to \$371,000 in annual staff costs, with minimal capital investment. Rethermalization kitchens require anywhere from two to six cooks, compared to roughly twice that amount for a stand-alone operation.

This same approach could be considered for other institutions that operate more than one kitchen, such as the Washington State Penitentiary (WSP) and McNeil Island Corrections Center

New facilities
use efficient
design . . .

. . . possible
for existing
kitchens?

(MICC). Although changing the smaller kitchens to operate as “rethermalization” kitchens would require minimal cost, it may require additional capital costs to increase the capacity at the main kitchens for these two locations.

Purchasing Prepared Food

The Airway Heights Corrections Center (AHCC) has the lowest per bed staffing costs in food services of all the institutions. It is collocated with the Correctional Industries Food Factory, which sells prepared food to institutions and to other customers.¹² As a result, AHCC operates its kitchen with fewer staff because much of its food preparation is limited to reheating, minor cooking, and serving. While many institutions purchase goods from the Food Factory, AHCC appears to do so in such a quantity that they can achieve staffing efficiencies.

In-house Baking Operations

Not all camps have bakers

By comparing institutions between two points in time, the audit team identified six pre-releases and camps that currently operate or will operate between 340 and 400 beds.¹³ Because of the similarity in size, cost differences between them can be isolated. The largest cost difference in food services is due to whether camps employ a baker. The two lowest cost facilities of these six, LCC and CCCC, are the only two that do not employ bakers. All other staffing levels within food services at these institutions are relatively the same.¹⁴

The larger question is whether the additional staff costs are justified in lower costs for baked goods. In the following exhibit, we compare annual bakery good costs between all institutions that employ bakers and those that do not.

¹² Additional information on the Food Factory is located in the Purchasing section of this chapter.

¹³ This particular analysis compares staffing at Olympic Corrections Center, Pine Lodge Pre-release, Coyote Ridge Corrections Center, Tacoma Pre-release, Larch Corrections Center, and Cedar Creek Corrections Center (the latter three are based on their projected 400 bed capacity staffing levels).

¹⁴ The basic staffing pattern for these institutions is seven Cooks and one Food Manager, with varying amounts of overtime allotments.

Exhibit 4
Comparison of Total Bakery Costs by Institution¹⁵

INSTITUTION	Purchased Baked Goods		Bakers		Total Per Bed
	Total Cost ¹⁶	Per Bed	Total Cost ¹⁷	Per Bed	
Olympic CC	\$23,540	\$68.03	\$39,140	\$113	\$181
Washington CC	\$92,801	\$81.05	\$39,140	\$34	\$115
Clallam Bay CC	\$18,024	\$21.01	\$78,280	\$91	\$112
Pine Lodge PR	\$0	\$0.00	\$39,140	\$109	\$109
McNeil Island CC	\$120,185	\$77.54	\$39,140	\$25	\$103
Coyote Ridge CC	\$19,212	\$48.03	\$39,140	\$49	\$98
Larch CC	\$11,684	\$87.19	0	0	\$87
Twin Rivers CC	\$69,970	\$85.75	0	0	\$86
Cedar Creek CC	\$16,849	\$68.49	0	0	\$68
WA St Reformatory	\$19,398	\$24.52	\$39,140	\$33	\$58
WA CC for Women	\$27,833	\$57.03	0	0	\$57
WA St Penitentiary	\$53,464	\$28.51	\$39,140	\$21	\$49
Airway Heights CC	\$30,719	\$15.87	0	0	\$16
FY 1997	\$503,678	\$46.02	\$352,260	\$32.19	\$78

Source: JLARC analysis.

Note that the six institutions with the highest combined per bed bakery costs do employ bakers. This indicates that on-site bakery operations do not produce overall cost efficiencies, with the possible exception of WSP. In fact, WSR has recently determined that its baking operation was not cost-efficient to bake for the entire Monroe Consolidated complex and is in the process of dismantling its bakery. This leaves seven baker positions at a total cost of \$274,000 per year that do not appear to be justified on a cost basis.

Most baker positions are not cost-efficient

¹⁵ Note that this analysis does not include the raw goods purchased by institutions that employ bakers. The raw goods are purchased from the institutions' commissaries, and are difficult to isolate. If we had the raw product numbers, they would increase the costs for those institutions with bakery operations.

¹⁶ These numbers are annual totals that are self-reported by the institutions to the CAFÉ program.

¹⁷ Note: Per bed figures are based on institutional operational capacity for FY 1997 and FY 1999; salary costs are yearly averages as of 6/30/97.

INSTITUTIONAL PURCHASING

Non-labor costs account for 30 percent of major institutions and camp budgets, or \$86 million for FY 1997. Of that amount, over half is dedicated to four categories:

Four
categories are
dominant

Medical Services (17 percent). This includes provider payments, testing fees, hospital stays, and medical supplies. These costs are currently being examined by the Health Care Cost Containment Unit at DOC and did not fall within the scope of this audit.

Food Services (17 percent). This includes such items as raw and some prepared food products and paper goods used for inmate meals. Cost control over these expenses occurs primarily at each institution, with some minor involvement of the central CAFÉ program.

Education Services (13 percent). This includes contracts that DOC enters into with local community colleges and other providers. For more information on these contracts and DOC's fiscal controls over them, refer to Chapter Five of this report.

Plant Maintenance (9 percent). This includes utilities, minor capital repairs and replacements, and general maintenance supplies.

The final stage of the institutional analysis was a review of the institutions' cost controls and purchasing practices. To complete this analysis, the audit team:

- Studied the institutions' variable non-labor costs over time;
- Reviewed cost trends for food;
- Reviewed purchasing practices related to the food factory; and
- Reviewed the current purchasing initiatives DOC is undertaking.

Variable Costs Over Time

One method DOC uses to both monitor costs and make projections for future population growth is the Direct Variable Costs (DVC) calculation. This calculation is an annual per inmate tally of all costs DOC has identified that change when populations grow or shrink even slightly. It includes raw food products, medical supplies, and utilities. The DVC figure represents 40 percent, or approximately \$31 million, of the institution's non-labor costs. Exhibit 5 below shows the actual and adjusted DVC from 1994 to 1997.

Exhibit 5
Per Inmate Direct Variable Costs from 1994 to 1997¹⁸

Year	Direct Variable Costs	
	Actual	In 1994 Dollars
1994	\$2,950	\$2,950
1995	\$3,147	\$3,067
1996	\$2,957	\$2,815
1997	\$3,042	\$2,828

Variable costs
declined 1994
to 1997

Source: JLARC analysis of DOC information.

As indicated above, the adjusted DVC has remained fairly constant over the past four years, with an overall 4 percent decrease.

Food Costs

The Combined Action Foodservice Economy (CAFÉ) Program is a central planning office that develops a statewide institutional menu and monitors overall institutional food cost components. The focus of the CAFÉ Program is to lower average raw food costs without compromising nutritional requirements.

According to the CAFÉ program, the institutional average total cost per meal (which includes staffing, raw food, and supplies)

¹⁸ DOC has only been tracking what specific components comprise the DVC since 1994. Prior to 1994, the central budget office did not track which budget items were included in the broad categories used to calculate DVC, and there is the potential that makeup of the categories changed from year to year.

has been consistently declining in real dollars from \$1.60 in 1981 to \$0.60 in 1997, based on 1981 Consumer Price Index.

Food Factory

Over 90 percent of the food products used by institutions is purchased under general state contracts that are negotiated by the Office of State Procurement within DOC of General Administration. However, up to 18 percent of each institution's non-labor food budget is used to purchase Food Factory products (excluding Airway Heights which purchases approximately 35 percent). This amount is a quota that DOC has required the institutions to purchase from the Food Factory.

Institutions must purchase from Food Factory

The Food Factory is a Correctional Industries' program that operates adjacent to Airway Heights Corrections Center, just outside of Spokane. The purpose of the Food Factory is to prepare bulk quantities of food that can be packaged, sold, and shipped to buyers within state and local governments. DOC institutions account for approximately 70 percent of Food Factory sales.¹⁹

Food Factory products, however, are made using raw food supplies purchased under the same contracts that individual institutions draw from. Therefore, the Food Factory pays the same price as the institutions, but then sells the product to institutions for a mark up. The food has been processed in some way, but in some cases, not to a significant degree (e.g., shredded cheese as opposed to block cheese). This means, then, that the only way institutions can achieve efficiencies through purchasing Food Factory products is if they reduce their staffing costs to account for the processing that takes place at the Food Factory.

Airway Heights Corrections Center is the only institution that has a reduced staffing level to reflect its reliance on Food Factory products. This can be seen in its cost per meal breakdown, as shown below in Exhibit 6.

¹⁹ The Food Factory also sells its products to local jails and social service programs such as Meals on Wheels.

Exhibit 6
Cost per Meal for AHCC and the Average for All Other
Institutions, FY 1997

	AHCC	Average
Food Costs	1.08	0.96
Supplies	0.14	0.11
Staffing	0.58	0.83
Total Cost	\$1.80	\$1.89

Source: CAFÉ program annual report.

As shown above, the overall costs per meal for AHCC is somewhat lower than the average, but the major difference is in the amount attributed to staffing costs.

The impact of purchasing from the Food Factory but not adjusting staffing levels will result in an additional \$134,000 spent in FY 1998.²⁰

Current Purchasing Initiatives

The overall DOC restructure is also driving changes in purchasing practices at the institutional level. DOC gave the audit team a copy of the "Purchasing and Warehousing Restructure Charge Statements." It appears DOC is planning significant improvements to monitor and control costs, such as:

- Forming a product standardization committee to ensure consistency in products;
- Organizing group purchasing for minor capital equipment;
- Investigating the acquisition of an automated accounts payable system that is connected to AFRS;
- Conducting a cost-benefit analysis of the best location for warehousing operations; and

**Purchasing
requirement
adds \$134,000
per year**

²⁰ This figure is calculated based on a 30 percent mark-up derived from the annual purchase requirement for all institutions, except AHCC.

- Establishing standards for warehouse inventories.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we provided a review of non-custody staffing and non-labor costs, which comprise 63 percent of the institutional budgets. The analysis included a high-level review of other states' models, a study of DOC's non-custody staffing costs and non-labor costs, a review of new purchasing initiatives, and an in-depth evaluation of food costs.

We found that costs on a per bed basis are going down and that DOC has several promising initiatives which will provide for more accountability and potential cost-savings. One of DOC's initiatives is to consolidate business functions to achieve cost-savings and more efficient operations. Additionally, a component of the business consolidation is focused on pursuing cost-controls in institutional purchasing practices.

Another such initiative is the development of a staffing model for non-custody positions which would make Washington's DOC one of the few states with such a tool. In this chapter, we recognized DOC's efforts so far, and outlined additional expectations for what should be included in the next phases of development. By applying the audit team's recommended approach to food services, we identified \$641,000 to \$779,000 in annual savings that could be achieved. Such savings would result from changing the use of secondary kitchens at major institutions, eliminating unjustified positions, and eliminating the cost increase associated with Food Factory purchases.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 2

The Department of Corrections should incorporate the elements identified in this report to ensure its non-custody staffing model represents cost-effective benchmarks. The elements include:

- ***Identifying workload drivers for each function;***

- ***Utilizing internal benchmark operations; and***
- ***Justifying variations from the model.***

Recommendation 3

The Department of Corrections should improve efficiencies in Food Services by:

- ***Eliminating baking operations that are not cost-effective;***
- ***Considering converting regular institutional kitchens into “rethermalization” kitchens, particularly the one at Twin Rivers Corrections Center; and***
- ***Eliminating the added cost of institutions purchasing from the Correctional Industries’ Food Factory Program.***

COMMUNITY SUPERVISION

Chapter Four

There are many changes occurring in community supervision this year. The audit team found that some of the operational changes are positive steps, but it is too early to comment on DOC's shift from monitoring offenders to monitoring and targeting specific offender characteristic/factor for intervention and case management.

A review of expenditures showed that the cost of supervision remained relatively stable. Changes underway, however, will make projecting future caseloads more subjective. The audit team also found that DOC cannot account for how well it complies with its statutory responsibility to enforce sentencing conditions. Two recommendations are made to address the need for maintaining workload and fiscal records and tracking enforcement efforts.

BACKGROUND

"Community supervision" is the overseeing or monitoring of offenders in the community under the court's jurisdiction, a status that is similar to and more commonly thought of as "probation and parole." Roughly \$48 million or 12 percent of DOC's operating budget in FY 1997 was spent on community supervision. To accomplish its responsibilities that year, DOC operated over 70 field and regional offices with approximately 890 FTEs.

This area of DOC was included in the performance audit because it has been growing rapidly and has not been audited by JLARC in the past. The objectives for JLARC's audit of community supervision were as follows:

Overview

**\$48 million
spent on
"probation &
parole"**

- Assess how well field operations ensure compliance with court orders for offenders;
- Identify the primary cost drivers behind the rapid budget growth; and
- Determine whether the Department focuses on factors that promote successful completion of supervision.

The following chapter presents our findings and provides information to the legislature about how the system is changing due to DOC initiatives. Community supervision, like other areas in DOC, is undergoing substantial change in 1998, which will affect the way resources are allocated to cases and change what is expected of community corrections officers.

COMPOSITION OF THE CASELOAD

Contrary to popular belief, most offenders under supervision have not come out of state prisons. Instead, they have come out of local jails or are serving sentences that do not require incarceration. Approximately 9 percent of the active cases at the end of FY 1997 had originated in prison and were still on face-to-face supervision. While the percentage is small, these cases account for roughly a quarter of the workload for community corrections officers. A breakdown compiled by JLARC on the origin and type of supervision of cases is shown below.

Exhibit 7
Supervision Caseload, End of FY 1997

<i>Offenders that came out of prison</i>	
Face-to-Face Supervision	4,500
<i>Offenders that came out of jail or on alternative sentences</i>	
Face-to-Face Supervision	18,700
Telephonic Reporting	6,000
<i>Offenders with legal financial obligations</i>	
Telephonic Reporting	
Or Mail-in	22,700
Total Cases DOC defines as "Active"¹	51,900

Source: JLARC estimates of DOC workload data.

¹ "Active" as defined by DOC excludes cases, for example, that are on bench warrant listed as escapes, or deported. There are over 27,000 cases categorized as "inactive."

Most cases
not from
prison

Face-to-face supervision is used for felons who have court-ordered conditions, and requires an officer to personally visit that offender each month. Telephonic and mail-in reporting are used for misdemeanants or new felony cases that do not have court-ordered conditions.

Telephonic and mail-in reporting is also used for offenders who have completed supervision but have legal financial obligations (LFO) remaining, e.g., restitution to victims, or whose only sentencing condition was payment of LFOs. This category of cases is increasing rapidly since Washington requires DOC to pursue outstanding LFOs for up to ten years. This ten-year requirement is also why the number of offenders under supervision in Washington seems so high in comparison to other states. Washington is essentially keeping cases that are completed in every other respect “on the books” for ten years in the hopes of increasing payment of financial obligations.

Financial obligations pursued for ten years

STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES

DOC is responsible for offenders sentenced in Superior Court.² The primary responsibility of DOC in the area of community supervision is to enforce court-ordered conditions that are set by judges at sentencing. There are many statutes that discuss the detailed responsibilities for DOC, e.g., how to handle violations and what notice is to be given to offenders of their rights. However, there is no overall intent or purpose statement in statute for community supervision; the manner in which it is handled in statute is as a means for implementation of state sentencing law.

Primary duty is to enforce conditions

COURT ORDERED CONDITIONS

There are standard conditions that judges may apply to a sentence based on the conviction. For example, if an offender’s crime was caused by drug or alcohol use, the offender may be prohibited from using such substances and may be monitored by DOC for drug use while under the supervision phase of his/her sentence.

² Approximately 95 percent of the offenders were felons, the rest were misdemeanants that were originally filed as felonies in Superior Court but were plea-bargained to a lesser charge.

Performance data unavailable

In this audit we tried to determine whether DOC was adequately enforcing conditions. However, we were unable to answer this question due to an absence of guidelines and performance data.

Enforcement Expectations and Results

In most cases, determining what would constitute “adequate enforcement” is not simple. Some guidelines exist for how to enforce conditions. But in general, what constitutes adequate enforcement is seen by DOC as requiring case-by-case assessment by the Community Corrections Officer (CCO).

DOC does track completion of affirmative conduct requirements such as “complete treatment,” “complete a specified amount of community service hours,” and “pay legal financial obligations.” However, what is expected of a CCO in order to enforce such requirements is not always clear. What enforcement steps are expected of CCOs is even more difficult to determine for other conditions, such as, “do not have contact with your victim,” “maintain employment,” and “do not leave the area.”

Further complicating an outside review of community supervision is the absence of aggregate or easily accessible data on what actions have been taken by CCOs in supervising cases. Individual CCO actions on a case may be logged into a computer using codes, or handwritten notes may exist in a file using personalized abbreviations. Other information on actions may not be logged anywhere but included as hard copy documents in the files, as may be the case with lab results of drug tests. Although one of the objectives of this audit was to determine if conditions are being adequately enforced, the data was too inaccessible.

Case data inaccessible

Having this type of performance information is particularly important in cases where offenders are not completing their requirements so that DOC can correct its practices, policies, or swiftly address the performance of personnel as necessary. Data on enforcement is also necessary if DOC wants to know whether CCOs’ actions have an effect on the successful completion of supervision.

One measurable performance expectation is the minimum number of times DOC expects a CCO to see an offender each

month. This expectation, known as “contact standards,” varies depending on the type of case but expectations could reach as high as six times per month. Unfortunately, the evidence shows that CCOs regularly do not meet these standards. We cannot say whether these results mean CCOs were not making good use of their time, whether there was something wrong with the level of contacts expected, or if there was something wrong with the way contacts were tracked.

Quality Control

If performance data is not available and the contact standards are not always being met, how does DOC provide for quality control over CCO actions? According to DOC managers, supervisors of field offices are responsible for providing quality control and ensuring that CCOs enforce conditions. The available documentation of this, however, is also limited in number and in detail. Supervisors conduct audits of roughly 10 percent of CCOs case files each year to determine, among other things, whether actions on the part of CCOs have been adequate. The determination is subjective, based on the supervisor’s experience and knowledge of the specific cases. The results of these audits are not aggregated to provide a systemwide picture of performance.

**Supervisor
case review
limited**

Implications

This lack of performance data does not mean that DOC is not actively enforcing conditions. It does, however, raise concerns that DOC cannot be sure it is consistently and adequately pursuing its primary responsibility in community supervision of enforcing court-ordered conditions.

BUDGET TRENDS

Another objective of the audit of community supervision was to determine what drove the increases in this budget and why the average cost per offender has increased.

The community supervision caseload grew 32 percent in five years, from roughly 39,250 cases at the end of FY 1992 to 51,900 cases by the end of FY 1997. At the same time, expenditures for community supervision grew 71 percent, from approximately \$28 million in FY 1992 to \$48 million in FY 1997. This growth

Budget and caseload grew rapidly

rate makes community supervision one of the fastest growing cost centers in DOC.

The table below presents our findings on the expenditure growth in community corrections by breaking out the influence of various cost drivers and showing their impact on the base budget. The single biggest driver of increased cost was the increase in caseload (45 percent) with inflation being the second most important factor (28 percent.) Other factors, such as the type of cases (20 percent) and increases to the supervision base budget through various decision packages (6 percent) account for the remainder.³

Exhibit 8 Drivers of Budget Increase

Expenditures for community supervision increased by \$19.7 million between FY 1992 and FY 1997. What was responsible for the difference?

Causes	Percent
More Offenders	45
Inflation	28
More Time-Consuming Cases ⁴	20
Approved Increases to Base	6
Total Accounted for by Above Factors	99

Source: JLARC Performance Audit of DOC.

Cost per unit relatively stable

The category of “More Time-Consuming Cases” requires some explanation. Basically, offenders coming out of prison sentenced under the Sentence Reform Act (SRA) of 1984 were expected by DOC to require more time from a CCO than offenders who were sentenced prior to the SRA. As the years went by, more offenders who were exiting prison had been sentenced under SRA and the number of offenders sentenced before SRA was dropping. The net result is that it cost roughly \$4 million more to handle the cases coming out of prison at the end of FY 1997.

Since the increases in expenditures for community supervision are essentially explained by the four factors above, we can

³ Examples of approved increases to base include staff to follow up on graduates of the work ethic camp and officers to handle stipulated agreements in place of the counties.

⁴ As determined by DOC’s classification system in use FY 1992 to FY 1997.

conclude that expenditures for supervision were relatively the same in FY 1997 as in FY 1992—once adjusted for inflation and changes in the type of offenders.

COST CONTROLS

The previous section discusses how costs have been relatively constant in community supervision when inflation and the types of cases are taken into account. This is largely the result of a three-part workload system that DOC uses to project the level of resources it needs as the caseload grows and changes. This workload system has been in place since 1989 and has been used each biennium to request additional funding for caseload growth. As such, the projections that have been made using this system since 1989 account for roughly three quarters of the existing base budget.

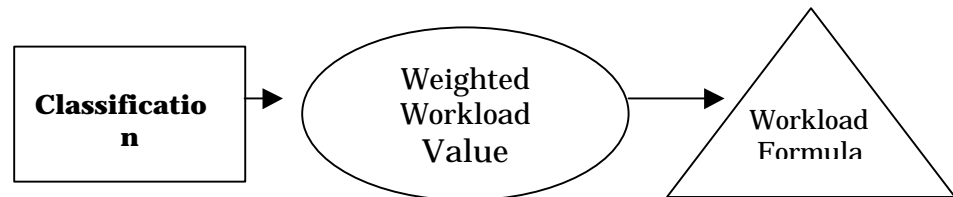
The Workload System

The workload system used for community supervision is a method for managing probation and parole caseloads. It essentially categorizes offenders, estimates the time each category takes to supervise, and then uses the “weighted caseload results” to project how much staffing and other resources are needed to accomplish the job. The system can be used to both predict the need for additional resources and to more evenly apportion new workload between offices and between CCOs. DOC utilizes this latter advantage of the system. While there is some variation in the system, for the most part, if one uses the values assigned by the system, workload is fairly even throughout the state and ratios of CCOs to supervisors to support staff are within expected ranges.

**Workload
system was
key**

**System
distributes
workload**

Exhibit 9
**Major Components of the Community Supervision
 Workload System**



This type of workload system is used in other states and, in theory, it can have many benefits for management and cost control. For Washington, the benefit has been that the system has assisted DOC with cost control, but there have been problems with its use for managing caseload.

The weakest part of the system has been the **first component, classification**. In reaction to the SRA, DOC implemented a classification framework that removed discretion by grouping all offenders on the basis of their conviction. This meant that the potential risk of the offender or the potential special needs of an offender were not considered, only their type of sentence. This had the effect of saying that offenders in the same category would require the same number of contacts from a CCO, on average, to successfully supervise. This is something that DOC came to realize was not a valid assumption in practice. For example, a drug offender who was mentally ill was assumed to take as much time, on average, to supervise as a drug offender who was not.

The **second component, the weighted workload value**, was based on studies of how much time is available for officers to handle cases and how long various classification categories took to supervise. DOC used an accepted methodology for producing these estimates; however, 1992 was the last time an estimate was done, making it arguably out of date. The authors of this approach recommend revising the weighting values on a two-year cycle.⁵

And finally, the **third component, the workload formula**, takes the projected workload and uses it to figure out how many CCOs, supervisors, and support staff are needed to handle new

⁵ The methodology used by DOC was developed by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD).

Classification
framework
problematic

Time estimates
outdated

workload. The number of CCOs needed is based on how much time various cases take to supervise. Support staff are also included in the formula, which assumes that their workload is sensitive to caseload. From our interviews regarding the duties of support staff, this assumption appears to be valid. Non-labor costs are also included in the model, but those assumptions proved difficult to audit. Non-labor costs for goods and services are based on historical expenditure patterns, and DOC has not saved historical data. Also due to a lack of historical data, we could not determine when or if assumptions have changed for equipment and other durable goods.

Although there were problems, using a framework like this can provide a consistent and objective way to manage growth. During the timeframe we analyzed for this study, it appears to have helped DOC control costs during a period of rapid expansion.

Cost-Efficiencies Below the Aggregate Level

While we were able to analyze total expenditures between FY 1992 and FY 1997, we were not able to analyze expenditures at a lower level to see if the department spent its supervision resources in FY 1997 in a different way than in FY 1992. Some of the questions that we could not answer due to lack of historical data include: “Were the number of FTEs devoted to direct casework in FY 1997 the same as FY 1992?” “What have been the detailed assumptions included in the workload formula each year?” The necessary historical information on staffing and the assumptions used for workload formula are not available to allow us to answer these questions.

CHANGES OCCURRING IN 1998

The philosophical and practical approach taken by DOC after SRA was one of emphasizing the traditional role of supervision: 1) Enforcing and monitoring the accomplishment of court ordered conditions; and 2) Protecting the community through surveillance of the offender.

**Non-labor
assumptions
are unclear**

**Historical
data not
available**

Changes That Have Already Happened

In 1992, DOC began an initiative that was called “Supervision . . . More than Monitoring.” The purpose was to have more of an effect on an offender’s criminal behavior and ultimately reduce the likelihood that he/she will recidivate.

DOC refers to the resulting approach as its “Balanced Interventions Initiative,” the purpose of which is “to combine the best practices of offender supervision with concepts and principles consistent with research regarding ‘What Works with Offenders.’”

One specific result of the initiative is that CCOs facilitate small groups of offenders with the goal of addressing patterns of criminal thinking. One such group program, Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT), is now widely used as a supervision tool by field offices. (The purpose and research on this program is discussed more in the next chapter on Offender Programming.)

In addition, the classification model was redesigned with the goal of better matching offender risk levels and needs with appropriate supervision levels and resources. The new classification model also requires CCOs to do case planning as part of supervision in order to try to address the factors that research indicates are related to criminal behavior. As part of the case planning effort, DOC has also significantly lowered its minimum expectations for how frequently CCOs need to see offenders each month. This “classification system” began in September 1997.

Changes in Progress

The second part of the workload system is being updated this spring. That piece will estimate the time needed for CCOs to meet department standards under the new classification model and case-planning requirement.

Until the Time-Study is completed this summer, no one knows whether there will be changes in the cost of supervision. DOC acknowledges that there are factors that may decrease costs and factors that may increase costs of the system, the net impact of both is yet unknown. Reductions in cost may occur from reduced contact standards and from focusing resources on fewer, but

Initiative to
do more than
monitoring

DOC
updating
time
estimates

more risky or needy cases, leaving others to lower levels of supervision, i.e., less expensive. However, the expectations for case-planning and facilitating offender groups may increase costs for all categories of offenders.

Regardless of how the estimates turn out, the impact of all these changes will be combined and difficult to separate out as to which influence accounts for what budget change.

Effect on the Outcome of Supervision

Whether these changes in community supervision will effect the outcome of supervision cases, or their future recidivism rates, is unknown at this point. There is not much known about how to best provide surveillance or affect recidivism through community supervision. Studies conducted on intensive supervision, an approach that was popular in the 1970s and 1980s, showed that increased levels of supervision did not necessarily improve recidivism rates.

The research that DOC is relying on in shifting its emphasis from a pure surveillance model to a more “balanced” approach, which includes addressing offender risk areas, is not specific to supervision experiences, but based on meta-analysis of many different types of offender programs.⁶

What does this mean? Existing research supports doing more than monitoring during community supervision if the goal is to reduce recidivism. However, what exactly works in that environment is unknown. The impact of DOC applying general offender research in the context of community supervision will not be known for some time and not until a formal evaluation is conducted.

CONCLUSION

Our audit of DOC’s performance in carrying out community supervision resulted in capturing the state of the system as it is undergoing significant change. Several of the problems we found with the system have recently been, or are currently being addressed by DOC, such as the revision of the classification model, and updating of the Time-Study used to weight workload.

**Budget impact
unknown**

**Impact on
recidivism
unknown**

⁶ Gendreau & Ross 1979, 1987; Cullen & Gendreau 1989.

The ability of the new system to address other concerns, specifically better documentation of DOC's performance on enforcing conditions, is unclear. Such a goal is not part of the current enhancement for the computer system. A recommendation is made at the end of this chapter that DOC be able to account for enforcement of sentencing conditions.

The audit team also found that there was good budget control over community supervision expenditures during the period between FY 1992 and FY 1997. Much of this is attributable to the workload system that was used by DOC during that time period. However, the reliability of that system to provide cost control will be reduced due to the discretionary aspects added to the first component of that system – the classification model. While the audit team agrees with the need to allow for more discretion in the classification model to account for risk, future budget requests for supervision will require additional scrutiny from the legislature and more accountability on the part of DOC. This increases the need for maintenance of historical information, which until recently, was not DOC's practice as well as disclosure of the workload and formula assumptions in a clear and consistent manner. A recommendation is made below for DOC to maintain this essential information.

Finally, the recent changes in community supervision have come from a DOC initiative of which the legislature has been apprised, but on which the legislature has not had a specific opportunity to take a position. These initiatives are neither required nor prohibited by statute since there is no statement of intent or purpose in the law. Whether the legislature will be made aware of it or not, that opportunity to act on DOC's initiative will come during the 1999 Session. DOC's FY 1999-FY 2001 budget request for supervision will reflect both cost changes due to the new classification system and costs related to the "Balanced Interventions Initiative."

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 4

In order to determine the Department of Corrections' performance in carrying out its primary responsibility, the department shall establish a means for tracking whether conditions

System
undergoing
significant
changes . . .

. . . and will
require more
accountability

of sentencing are being adequately enforced and met for offenders on community supervision

Recommendation 5

To provide for future accountability, the Department of Corrections needs to make available to the legislature workload and budget assumptions associated with community supervision and should maintain key historical information.

OFFENDER PROGRAMMING

Chapter Five

In this chapter we provide discussions on how DOC has complied with the major legislative mandates that have passed in recent years, including shifting a significant portion of its educational resources to basic skills instruction and expanding Correctional Industries.

However, the audit team also found that DOC lacks a strategic approach to offender programming. DOC does not have the coordinated management oversight needed to ensure that its programs have clear goals and objectives, are developed and implemented consistently, and are effective in achieving its goals. Research efforts are also not coordinated or prioritized. Contained in this report are recommendations for several action steps DOC should take to improve its management and fiscal oversight over offender program planning.

BACKGROUND

DOC offers a variety of education, work, and treatment programming to offenders under its jurisdiction. In the major institutions, DOC offers a wide range of programming in each of these areas. Although such programs are also offered in the minimum security camps and Pre-Release facilities, transitional “life skills” and employment-related programs receive a greater emphasis than other educational or treatment programming. In Work Training Release facilities and within Community Supervision, there are some “aftercare” programs for those who have completed chemical dependency treatment, as well as an opportunity to participate in “Offender Change Groups.”

There is no definitive budget figure available for total offender programming expenditures within DOC, however we estimate

Overview

Expenditures can only be estimated

that FY 1997 expenditures ranged from \$15-\$16 million.¹ This figure is only estimated because funding for these programs cannot be discretely separated from facility operations. Exhibit 9 shows the major programs and their approximate FY 1997 costs. Descriptions of these programs and others discussed in this report can be found in Appendix 3.

Exhibit 9 Major Offender Programs FY 1997 Estimated Costs

Program Name	FY 1997 Cost
Basic Skills (ABE, GED)	\$4,500,000
Vocational Programming	\$2,800,000
Chemical Dependency	\$1,800,000
Other Transition/Life Skills Programming	\$1,500,000
Sex Offender Treatment Program	\$1,400,000
Victim Awareness/Anger Management	\$200,000
<i>Educational Administration</i>	<i>\$3,500,000</i>
Total	\$15,700,000

Source: JLARC estimates based on DOC budget information.

AUDIT OBJECTIVES

Offender programming was targeted in the audit because it has been a focus of major recent legislation, which resulted in significant policy and operational changes within DOC. Legislation passed in 1993 and 1995 significantly impacted how offender education and work programming resources are managed and prioritized within DOC.²

The primary objectives for our audit of Offender Programming were as follows:

- Evaluate the Department's compliance with key legislation.

Strong legislative interest in programming

¹ This range includes the \$15.3 million in Exhibit 1 and an allowance for a limited amount of other programming provided directly by DOC staff for which costs are not available.

² 2E2SHB 2010, Chapter 19, Laws of 1995.

- Determine if the Department is effectively managing and controlling the cost of its programs.
- Understand the Department’s offender program planning and development process.
- Identify how the Department monitors the quality and effectiveness of its programs.
- Determine whether the Department’s programs reflect what is known nationally about effective offender treatment.

Due to the significant amount of legislative interest in education and work programming, we completed a detailed analysis of the extent of inmate participation in these programs, as well as an in-depth review of education programming costs, delivery, and management oversight. These findings are discussed in the following section.

In addition, we completed a high-level review of offender “rehabilitation” programs and other correctional programs that are expected to impact criminal behavior. The purpose of this review was to identify what programs DOC offers and to determine their origin and purpose. This scope included Chemical Dependency and the Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP) at Twin Rivers, along with smaller “transitional” and “life skills” programs such as Victim Awareness Education and Anger Management training. We also reviewed DOC’s overall management approach to offender programming to determine what its process is for developing, delivering, and evaluating its programming. Our findings on these topics are discussed later in this chapter.

LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

In recent years, the legislature has passed specific mandates with regard to several offender programming areas including the Chemical Dependency Treatment Program, the Sex Offender Treatment Program, and education and work programming. However, legislative direction for offender programs in general is broad. The statute simply states that “Since most offenders return to the community, it is wise . . . to make an investment in effective rehabilitation programs for offenders, and the wise use

**Major
programs
covered in
audit**

**Mandate:
invest in
effective
programs**

Treatment program mandates met

of resources.”³ Our audit of DOC offender programming, while finding many positive aspects, raises questions about whether DOC is making wise programming investments. An evaluation of DOC’s performance in this regard can be found in the following two sections of this chapter.

Chemical Dependency

The 1989 Omnibus Alcohol and Controlled Substance Act required DOC to develop a chemical dependency program that would provide a “continuum of care” for substance-dependent offenders within the main prison system and to develop “substance abuse treatment programs” at two sites within Community Corrections.⁴ Our review found that DOC has met this mandate by providing a “continuum of care” within all of its prison facilities, and programs at specific Community Corrections facilities.⁵ The Chemical Dependency Program has actually expanded beyond its original mandate and now operates at all work release facilities.

Sex Offender Treatment Program

The Sex Offender Treatment Program at Twin Rivers Center was created in 1986 when the legislature mandated that felony sex offenders be incarcerated within the prison system rather than civilly committed to state hospitals run by the Department of Social and Health Services.⁶ DOC was required to develop a treatment program that included a means of measuring the program’s success, including completion and recidivism rates. DOC appears to have complied in terms of program operations. In 1995 it was also mandated to develop and implement an evaluation tool that would measure the program’s success.⁷ Our review found that DOC developed an evaluation plan by December 1995 as mandated, however an evaluation has not yet

³ RCW 72.09.010 Section (6).

⁴ 1989 Omnibus Alcohol and Controlled Substance Act (Sections 415-416, Chapter 271, Laws 1989).

⁵ The original mandate required that programs be established at Pine Lodge Pre-Release and Reynolds Work Release.

⁶ RCW 9.94A.120.

⁷ 1995 Appropriations Act, Chapter 18, Laws of 1995.

been completed. Audit concerns on this issue are further discussed in the “Program Effectiveness” section of this chapter.

Education Programming

The third key area we evaluated for legislative compliance was DOC’s response to the educational and work mandates of HB 2010, which passed in the 1995 Legislative Session.⁸ The basic intent of these changes was to re-orient corrections programming towards providing offenders with skills that will help them become gainfully employed while within prison and following their release. With regard to education programming, the bill required DOC to:

- Re-prioritize its educational resources to emphasize basic skills instruction, including Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Educational Development (GED), and work-related vocational training.
- Assess the basic academic skill levels of all offenders entering the system and refer them to the appropriate programs.
- Require all offenders to participate in either work or education programs in order to be eligible for prison privileges.

Legislation emphasized work and education

Prioritization of Education Resources

Our review of the education budget found that DOC shifted a significant amount of resources into basic skills. As can be seen in Exhibit 10, the portion of the education budget allocated to basic skills increased by 12 percent between fiscal years 1993 and 1997. Most of the funding cuts came from the “College Academic” category, including funding for Associate of Arts degree programs. Also in compliance with HB 2010, funding was cut for vocational programs that were not clearly linked with obtaining jobs within and outside prison.

⁸ Chapter 19, Laws of 1995.

Exhibit 10
Shift in Educational Resources
FY 1993 and FY 1997

DOC
prioritizes
basic skills

Program Type	FY 93	FY 1997
Basic Skills	27%	39%
College Academic	6%	0%
Crime-Related/Other	2%	8%
Vocational	30%	23%
Administration	35%	30%
	100%	100%
Budget Totals	\$10,500,000	\$11,800,000

Source: JLARC estimates based on DOC budget information.

Investments in the “crime-related” programming category, which includes courses such as Victim Awareness, Anger Management, and a variety of employment-related training and “life skills” programs, also increased during this time period. This increase, which was not driven by HB 2010, reflects a Department-initiated effort to provide additional skills training that is related to offenders’ case management plans and is designed to facilitate their transition out of the prison system.

Academic Skills Assessment

48 percent
need basic
skills
education

In terms of the mandates for academic skills assessment, DOC has stated that all offenders are assessed when they enter the system, and are referred to the appropriate level of basic skills programming. As of November 1997, DOC data shows that 91 percent of incarcerated offenders have been tested and 48 percent of them were assessed to need basic skills training. Of those assessed to need this training, only 41 percent have been enrolled, with another 11 percent on waiting lists. DOC is unable to provide a definitive explanation as to why the remaining 48 percent have not been served. This is because community college providers and individual case managers do not track the reasons why offenders are not referred or enrolled.

Offender Participation in Education and Work Programs

As mentioned earlier, DOC was mandated to insure that every eligible offender must participate in either education or work programming in order to be eligible for privileges, including earned early release time.⁹ We confirmed that DOC has infraction policies in place to enforce these requirements and appears to be applying them. However, the infraction data is not discretely tracked for education and work programs, but for refusing to participate in any kind of DOC program. Following some analysis of the data, we were able to estimate that, in fiscal year 1997, approximately 409 offenders received infractions for refusing to participate in work and education, and cumulatively lost 10,230 days of earned early release time.

In response to HB 2010's mandate to increase offender participation in education and work programs and to address the general legislative intent for DOC to "avoid idleness," we wanted to know to what extent offenders are participating in these programs. Because of duplicate headcount problems that exist in enrollment data, DOC was unable to provide us with reliable figures on the number of offenders enrolled in education, work, or both.

As an alternative measure of participation, the audit team conducted an in-depth analysis of the amount of offender time spent in education and work programs in FY 1997. Although DOC had an informal goal of keeping offenders occupied for six hours a day, five days a week, actual activity was not tracked. Therefore, we compiled the data necessary to estimate the amount of time offenders spent in education and work programming.

When our figures were compared to DOC's "full-time" target of 30 hours per week for each eligible offender, we found that DOC was relatively close to achieving its target on a systemwide basis. However, performance varied between individual facilities. Five facilities exceeded the goal, another six were

⁹ HB 2010 exempted certain classes of inmates from the participation requirements. Please see the charts in Appendix 4 for detailed definitions. Privileges can also include family visitation and access to recreational facilities.

Offender participation mandated

Reliable enrollment figures not available

Most time spent working

close to reaching it, and four fell significantly short. On average, education and work programming occupied 94 percent of available offender time, with 19 percent spent in education and 75 percent in work. The performance of individual institutions varied. (See Appendix 5 for more detail.)

Work Programs

Another piece of legislation that significantly affected DOC passed the legislature during the 1993 Session. This bill mandated the expansion of Class I and II Correctional Industries jobs, which was intended to increase the amount of meaningful inmate employment and to reduce the cost of incarceration.¹⁰ Class I industries are those in which private sector businesses operate within DOC facilities and employ offenders to produce goods. Class II industries are those which produce goods for sale to other public agencies and are managed directly by DOC. Revenue received from the sale of Class II goods and services is intended to pay for inmate wages and to off-set the cost of incarceration. In both Class I and II industries, offenders receive compensation comparable to prevailing wages. However, DOC deducts 15-20 percent of offender wages for the cost of incarceration, another 20 percent for Legal Financial Obligations (LFO), 10 percent for mandatory inmate savings, and 5 percent for crime victim's compensation.

Job mandates exceeded

JLARC's audit verified that DOC has either met or exceeded the Correctional Industries job expansion mandates for fiscal years 1995 through 1997. Most of the growth occurred in the DOC-operated Class II industries. Exhibit 11 shows the number of jobs created compared to the number mandated.

Exhibit 11
Class I and II Job Creation

	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997
Actual	1491	1542	1876
Mandated	1275	1475	1675

Source: Correctional Industries reports.

¹⁰ ESB 5989; Chapter 20, Laws of 1993.

In summary, DOC appears to have proactively complied with the specific legislative mandates for offender education and work programming. An additional objective of our audit was to determine whether there is adequate management oversight over education and rehabilitation programs. This is discussed in the following section.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Most of DOC's offender programs are provided by external contractors, the largest of which are the local community colleges. Of the estimated \$15-\$16 million DOC spent on offender programming in FY 1997, approximately \$10.5 million was through community college contracts.¹¹ They offer courses in a wide range of areas, including basic academic skills, vocational education, anger management, and a variety of transitional "life skills" and employment-related skills training courses. DOC also contracts with community treatment providers for its Chemical Dependency program. These contracts totaled approximately two million dollars in FY 1997. Other offender programs, including SOTP, some "life skills" courses, and community supervision offender "change groups," are operated by DOC staff.

Decentralized management also characterizes offender programs, which have varying degrees of involvement from headquarters. For example, the Education Services section at headquarters oversees the budget and contracting process, provides guidance on DOC offender education policies, and manages reporting requirements. However, programming decisions and contract agreements are negotiated directly between facility superintendents and educational providers. In contrast, the Chemical Dependency program is more centrally managed, with a headquarters program manager who centrally selects treatment providers, negotiates contracts, monitors service delivery and determines programming content.

**Contractors
provide most
programs**

**Management
decentralized**

¹¹ Source: FY 1997 budget and educational provider contracts.

Fiscal Management

Our audit included a review of the fiscal oversight over the largest of offender programs, education programming. A review of DOC contract oversight with the community colleges and other providers found that DOC has controls in place to ensure that expenditures are reviewed and remain within the contract budgets.

However, the audit team also identified some areas of concern. First, we found that DOC does not do a service delivery review to verify that the level of services (such as number of students served, courses delivered, and days of instruction offered) agreed to in the budget and provider contracts were actually delivered. While educational providers are required to submit regular activity reports, and to obtain superintendent approval for expenditures, this information is not used to monitor service delivery agreements.

In addition, a comparative review of the provider costs found that a wide range in costs between facilities and providers exists, of which the Department was unaware. These variances could not be explained by the amount of services provided. Our research found that educational budget allocations are based on the occupational capacity of, and the amount of funds historically allocated to, each facility, rather than on the actual cost of providing a certain type or level of service. DOC does not currently engage in any type of competitive process for awarding educational contracts, nor does it compare the different providers' costs of providing similar services. This apparent lack of fiscal oversight by DOC, as well as accountability on the part of the educational providers, raises concerns that DOC may not be using its education resources most effectively.

Program Information Management

Our analysis of DOC's oversight over offender programs also included a review of whether DOC has the information and systems necessary for effective program management. We found that, at the local facility level, the quality and availability of program operations information was generally good. Program managers and staff were generally very knowledgeable and able to provide current information on inmate enrollment, program completions, and services delivered.

No review of educational service delivery

Wide range in contractor costs

Systemwide knowledge of programming was found to be limited. The Division of Offender Programs was unable to provide us with a list of offender programs and their locations offered within the system. Comprehensive information on program curriculums and offender enrollments was also generally not available from the division. This required us to obtain programming information directly from program managers, facility superintendents, and staff. In many cases, the only sources of information were contracted providers, not DOC employees.

**Limited
knowledge of
systemwide
programming**

The audit team found that this lack of systemwide program information and variances between offender programs is due in part to limited oversight over programming and program providers. The lack of a centralized, coordinating authority has allowed program selection, delivery, and data reporting practices to vary significantly between sites and program providers. Another factor which has complicated the availability of good program information is that the majority of offender programs are provided through contractors – without effective internal monitoring by DOC. This has created additional coordination and standardization problems because program providers often have their own unique means of delivering a program and maintaining data.

The effect of this decentralized authority and operations is that headquarters has little knowledge of basic, systemwide program operations, such as current program offerings and offender enrollments. In addition, aggregate and historical program data is difficult to obtain. In many cases, data was not valid or reliable, or simply not available. This prevents headquarters from being able to identify trends, monitor systemwide performance, and exercise basic oversight over the service delivery of contracted providers. As discussed earlier, individualized course delivery and data reporting practices also make it difficult to effectively compare services and costs between sites. For example, comparing the community college education and “life skills” programs is very difficult because they use varying definitions of student “FTE,” offer programming for a different number of days each year, and often use different curriculums for the same classes. Also, a “double-counting” problem between education and work programming makes it impossible to get an accurate account of the unduplicated number of offenders participating in these programs.

**Aggregate data
difficult to
obtain**

OBTS data often unreliable

Another limitation to DOC's ability to collect aggregate programming data is the Offender Based Tracking System mainframe computer system, OBTS. Due to limitations in the initial software design, the age of the system, and the difficulty in making programming changes to the software, systemwide data generated by OBTS is difficult to obtain and often inaccurate. For example, OBTS is used to track results for basic education assessment testing done on all offenders. However, due to the system limitations described above, DOC was only able to provide accurate assessment information after directly accessing individual hard copy offender files at prison sites.¹²

New tool may improve data availability

The data issues discussed above are a cause for concern because the evident lack of systemwide knowledge suggests that management oversight may be lacking. DOC is aware of these issues and has been working on solutions. In response to the concerns raised by our audit, some projects have been accelerated. One example is the development of the Resource Program Management (RPM) tool, which is a new enhancement to OBTS intended to improve work and educational data-tracking capabilities. As a result of this audit, the schedule for this project was accelerated, with final completion now planned for September 1998. (The project previously lacked a completion date.) Plans for the RPM appear promising and are expected to address some of the data-availability concerns discussed above. However, the success of the new system, and the validity and reliability of the data collected, will strongly depend on DOC's ability to also address the management oversight issues previously discussed.

¹² DOC recently contracted for a feasibility study to replace or upgrade OBTS. See Appendix 6 for our pre-audit review of DOC information-technology issues.

PROGRAM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

JLARC's audit included a review of DOC's process for program planning to determine the origin and purpose of its offender programs and found that:

- Some programs were centrally-developed and are offered at every prison facility in a relatively consistent manner with central oversight (Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT), ABE, Chemical Dependency). Others were developed locally, have varying curriculums, and lack oversight.
- Most offender programs lack purpose statements and outcome goals, even those such as Chemical Dependency, which are centrally-coordinated and have standard curriculums.
- Only the largest DOC programs, including SOTP and the ABE and GED programs, have external models or standards to structure their content and delivery. The Chemical Dependency program was developed using a variety of research sources and industry practices. It is also working to meet Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (DSHS) certification standards; however, these do not directly pertain to the effectiveness of treatment.

In short, there is no standard, coordinated process for developing new programs. DOC is aware of this issue and is making some isolated efforts to address it. For example, Education Services and Correctional Industries recently developed a new program, "Job-Readiness," which has a standard curriculum and is intended to operate at every institution, camp, and pre-release facility.

Program Development Process: Division of Prisons

Within the former Division of Prisons (DOP), programming decisions were generally made at the local or program level. Superintendents, program managers, and contracted providers made decisions regarding new program development and implementation. Consultation and approval from headquarters

Wide variation
in development
approaches

Programming
decisions
decentralized

or division management was usually not required provided changes were made within existing resources and did not conflict with DOC mandates.¹³ This program development process has resulted in a great deal of variation in offender programming among prison facilities. It has also allowed programs to be developed that lack clear purposes and goals.

Program Development Process: Division of Community Corrections

The program development process within the former Division of Community Corrections (DCC) used a more comprehensive approach than that within DOP. Program development within DCC was generally done in a strategic, coordinated manner, in which initiatives and goals were established, criteria for program selection were developed, and programs were operated consistently. In contrast to program planning within DOP, the authorizing approval for new programs within DCC was centralized and done at a high level of division management.

Summary

With the exception of DCC's planning, DOC's uncoordinated approach to programming has resulted in the creation of many programs that lack clear goals and objectives and program delivery standards. This is raised as a concern in this audit because without clear program expectations, DOC has no way to know if its programs are achieving their original purposes. This issue will be addressed further in the following discussion on program effectiveness.

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

As part of this audit, we wanted to know how effective DOC programs are at reducing recidivism, not just for those with recidivism as a primary goal, but for a broader group of programming. Unfortunately, few Washington programs have been the subject of rigorous statistical evaluation; therefore, little is known about their impact. To provide information on the potential for DOC's programming to have an effect on

**Community
Corrections
more
strategic**

**Few programs
evaluated for
recidivism**

¹³ For example, DOC's mandate to emphasize "basic skills" instruction, and to provide chemical dependency and sex offender treatment programming.

recidivism, the audit contracted with a corrections research specialist at the University of Maryland to review evaluations of treatment programs in other jurisdictions. These report findings are discussed at the end of this chapter.

DOC programs, such as the sex offender and chemical dependency programs, arguably have “rehabilitation” or reducing recidivism as the primary goal. In addition to reducing recidivism, other offender programs such as education and work programming can also have internal management goals such as keeping inmates productively occupied and reducing the cost of corrections. The “effectiveness” of offender programs can thus be measured in different ways depending on their purpose. Thus, in addition to the external research on recidivism being completed by the University of Maryland, we also wanted to review DOC’s internal efforts to monitor and evaluate program performance.

Program Evaluations

Our audit reveals that the two largest treatment programs within DOC have each been struggling with their evaluations. The Sex Offender Treatment Program was created in 1986 and had an estimated FY 1997 budget of \$1.4 million.¹⁴ In 1995, the legislature mandated that DOC develop a plan and complete an evaluation of the SOTP.¹⁵ An evaluation plan was subsequently completed. However, there have apparently been barriers to completing the evaluation itself. From what we are able to determine, these barriers do not appear significant in light of the sizable investment the state makes in this program. There appears to be a lack of oversight and priority placed on this evaluation.

The second treatment program is Chemical Dependency, whose program expenditures were estimated to be approximately \$1.8 million for FY 1997. An evaluation of this program has been planned for over two years and was included as a goal in its 1996 Annual Report. However, an evaluation plan is not yet in place, and DOC was unable to provide JLARC with a clear update on the status of the evaluation. As in the case of the

Different
measures of
effectiveness
possible

Treatment
evaluations
planned . . .

. . . not
completed

¹⁴ RCW 9.94A.120 Section (2).

¹⁵ 1995 Appropriations Act (ESHB 1410).

SOTP, there does not appear to be any management oversight over this evaluation. It does not appear that completing these evaluations has been a research or management priority.

No oversight of program review and evaluation

In terms of DOC's internal process for program review and evaluation, our audit confirmed that such a process does not exist. Although the Research and Planning Section at headquarters performs some evaluations, much of its work is focused on operational studies, management reports, and data validity checks. Although, completing this work is important, Research and Planning does not serve in a leadership role in the program development, research, and evaluation work performed in DOC. We were unable to identify a stated purpose, role, or expectations for the Section, and found that it lacks an official policy describing its purpose. In addition, our audit found instances where program managers were conducting program evaluations of their own programs, without any consultation with Research and Planning or other headquarters coordination. These issues raise concerns about DOC's ability to monitor program results and to invest resources in effective programs.

External Research

Effectiveness of external programs reviewed

To provide information on the *potential* for DOC's programming to be effective, we looked to evaluations of programs in other jurisdictions. While there is much research on correctional programming, identifying what is quality research can be difficult. To identify what is known nationally, JLARC contracted with Doris Layton MacKenzie, Ph.D.¹⁶ from the University of Maryland. This researcher was selected, in part, because the University of Maryland has developed a means of assessing the reliability of evaluation research on an easy-to-understand scale of 5 (most reliable) to 1 (not reliable).¹⁷

¹⁶ Dr. McKenzie is the Director of the Evaluation and Research Center in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Maryland.

¹⁷ The scale was developed for the University of Maryland report "What Works in Crime Prevention" that was conducted under the support of the National Institute of Justice and presented to Congress in the Spring of 1997.

Scope and Objectives for the Literature Assessment

The researchers were asked to review the quality of the research available on selected areas of offender programming that are offered by DOC. These areas included:

- ✓ Sex Offender Treatment
- ✓ Adult Basic Education
- ✓ Certain Substance Abuse Programs¹⁸
- ✓ Vocational Training
- ✓ Work Ethic Camps
- ✓ Correctional Industry Work
- ✓ Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- ✓ Victim Awareness Programs
- ✓ Life Skills Training
- ✓ Anger/Stress Management

Once the research was collected and scored for scientific rigor, the researchers were asked to review the research that scored well and answer two questions:

- What is known about the ability of the program areas to reduce future criminal activity?
- What is known about the effectiveness of the type of programs and major program elements that are currently operating in Washington?

To draw conclusions about effectiveness, the researchers used their findings to group programming areas into the following categories: “What Works,” “What Doesn’t Work,” “What is Promising,” and “What is Unknown.”¹⁹ For most of the program areas, the existing research does not score particularly high for scientific rigor. As a result, the researchers are quick to point out that all of their conclusions are tentative and that there

Program areas were reviewed . . .

. . . and classified by their effectiveness

¹⁸ Prison-based chemical dependency treatment provided on an outpatient basis is the largest Chemical Dependency (CD) program in DOC and was not evaluated in this research. It is expected to be done this summer by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

¹⁹ The full report produced by the researchers with the University of Maryland is very detailed and substantive and can be obtained from JLARC upon request. It also can be obtained from the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee’s web site by clicking here.

needs to be more research before definitive information is known.

Results of the Research

What is known about the ability of each program area to reduce recidivism?

The following were program areas that had enough high-quality research and positive findings that the researchers categorized them as “What Works:”

“What works”

- Correctional industry and vocational programs combined with other interventions (education, job search, job placement);
- Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) (A cognitive-behavioral therapy program); and
- Therapeutic Communities (TC) to treat chemical dependency.

In some areas, there was often conflicting evidence or an inadequate amount of research to conclude that that program area was effective. However, if there were enough high-quality research and positive findings in those cases, the researchers categorized them as “What’s Promising.” These included:

“What’s promising”

- Sex offender treatment programs, particularly those using a cognitive-behavioral approach to treatment (as DOC does at the sex offender program at Twin Rivers Correctional Center)
- Adult Basic Education

In Victim Awareness, Anger Stress/Management, “life skills” training, and Work Release, the researchers concluded that there is not enough research or quality research upon which to draw conclusions.

What is known about the effectiveness of the type of programs and major program elements that are currently operating in Washington?

While the effect of some programs is unknown, none of the program areas offered within Washington's DOC were categorized as "What Doesn't Work." All of them fall under the "What Works," "What's Promising," or "What's Unknown" categories. The research report also identifies some programs that are effective or promising, but that may not be provided in Washington. To determine if it does not have these programs, DOC will need to do a detailed comparison of its programs with those covered in the research.

The literature review only makes a few high-level comparisons between Washington programs and others that have been evaluated. We do not know how closely DOC's programs resemble those that have been evaluated. Much more would have to be known to conclude that Washington's programs could achieve results similar to those of a program shown to be successful. For example, Therapeutic Communities in other states have shown positive results on chemically-dependent offenders, but whether Washington can duplicate those results depends on how similar our program is to those evaluated.

In many cases the research also suggests preliminary findings about duration of treatment or populations that respond best to programs. This valuable information is the type that can assist DOC in designing, choosing, and planning programs. However, using research and external information does not seem to be a regular practice throughout DOC programming.

CONCLUSION

In summary, our review of DOC's offender programming found that DOC has complied with legislative mandates and made significant policy and operational changes in both education and work programming. However, the audit team also found that, with the exception of the division-wide planning in the former Division of Community Corrections, DOC does not have a strategic, planned approach to offender programming. The institution- and contractor-driven approach DOC uses has resulted in a wide range of locally-developed programs that lack consistency, reliable activity data, and standard costs. This has

Areas
"effective or
promising"

More detailed
comparisons
necessary

allowed contracted providers, individual program managers, and institution staff to make key program content and cost decisions without strategic management direction.

In addition to operational limitations, this approach has prevented DOC from strategically addressing offender programming issues in the following ways:

More strategic approach is needed

- Knowing what program offerings and needs exist throughout the system, in order to ensure that key curriculums are consistent and needs are prioritized and met;
- Ensuring that programs offered are consistent with DOC offender programming goals and the strategic plan, and have methods and criteria for evaluating their success;
- Comparing program performance to relative costs;
- Ensuring that programs, especially those requiring a major investment of resources, are evaluated for their performance and effectiveness; and
- Reviewing research to determine if programs proven to be effective are, or are not, being offered at DOC.

As mentioned earlier in this report, DOC is undergoing a significant restructure under the direction of a new Secretary. However, it is important to note that addressing the offender programming issues discussed in this chapter is not a focus of the reorganization. It will thus be necessary for DOC to monitor the effects of the regionalization of its administrative structure, to insure not only that program planning does not become more fragmented, but that past deficiencies are corrected.

Our review found that the issues listed above were not a priority of DOC's during the time period of our audit. This raises concerns about how effectively DOC programming resources have been managed and invested. In response to briefings on our findings, DOC has made us aware of research assistance for which it has contracted to strengthen its research capabilities. In addition, it has informed us of the elevation of the Research and Planning to the Secretary's level and the creation of a research advisory board. These are positive steps that reflect a

new DOC emphasis on the importance of research. Although we cannot comment on their effectiveness until they have been implemented, our initial review suggests that these initiatives may not be sufficient to address the need for a fundamental change in the way program planning and operations are managed departmentwide. Therefore, we make the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 6

The Department of Corrections should “invest wisely in effective offender rehabilitation programs” as legislatively directed. It should do this by developing internal methods of addressing, at a minimum, the limitations listed below that prevent it from fulfilling this mandate:

- ***Knowing what program offerings and needs exist throughout the system, in order to ensure that key curriculums are consistent and needs are prioritized and met;***
- ***Ensuring that programs offered are consistent with Department of Corrections offender programming goals and the strategic plan, and have methods and criteria for evaluating their success;***
- ***Comparing program performance to relative costs;***
- ***Ensuring that programs, especially those requiring a major investment of resources, are evaluated for their performance and effectiveness; and***
- ***Reviewing research to determine if programs proven to be effective are, or are not, being offered at Department of Corrections.***

Recommendation 7

The Department of Corrections should address the fiscal and operational oversight issues identified in this report by:

- **Establishing cost standards for educational programs, and allocating resources based on need and DOC programming objectives.**
- **Establishing service delivery expectations for educational providers and conducting contract and service reviews as an ongoing part of the budget process.**
- **Establishing standard programming and reporting requirements that will produce valid and reliable data on offender participation and costs.**

Recommendation 8

The Department of Corrections should complete a program review of its Chemical Dependency Treatment Program to assess the program's purpose, management oversight, and operational efficiency, and report the findings to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee.

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

Appendix 1

SCOPE

This study is a performance audit of the Department of Corrections (DOC). The audit will use any applicable internal (within DOC) and external (other states) benchmarks in addressing questions of efficiency and economy, as well as performance.

OBJECTIVES

1. Examine the effectiveness of major programs within the department and determine, where possible, if they are achieving their desired results in a cost-effective manner.
2. Evaluate DOC's use of resources to identify if they are operating efficiently and economically.
3. Determine if management controls exist within DOC for areas that may have significant policy or fiscal impacts.
4. Determine whether the agency is complying with general legislative intent and more recent legislative direction.

Appendix 1 (Cont.)

Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee

Performance Audit of the Department of Corrections

Institutions	Treatment Programs	Community Corrections	Inmate Work & Educ.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the department's track record on key performance indicators, e.g., escape rates, court orders. • Assess the department's track record on cost per inmate. • Evaluate the efficiency of the non-custody staffing model for prisons. • For selected functional areas, identify if there are more cost-effective operations in other states that could be transferable to WA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the origin, purpose, and cost of treatment programs in DOC, and identify what is known about the effectiveness of WA programs. • Determine whether the department's treatment programs reflect what is known nationally about effective offender treatment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the primary cost drivers behind the rapid budget growth in this division. • Assess how well field operations ensure compliance with court ordered conditions. • Evaluate whether the department focuses on factors that promote successful completion of supervision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the relative cost per unit for inmate programs and whether there are sufficient management controls on program costs. • Assess how well the programs assist with managing the prison population. • Identify what is known about the ability of each of these programming areas to have an impact on crime patterns

AGENCY-WIDE AREAS

- Evaluate the adequacy of management controls on non-labor costs and health services
- Assess the ability of management information systems to serve department needs cost-effectively and provide for accountability.
- Determine if the department has complied with legislative intent, particularly recent legislative actions.
- Determine if the department has complied with previous JLARC recommendations.

AGENCY RESPONSES

Appendix 2

- **Department of Corrections**
- **Office of Financial Management**

To link to this appendix, click [here](#).

Appendix 3
Glossery of DOC's Major Education and Treatment Programs

PROGRAM NAME	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	Basic literacy and math instruction for offenders testing below the 9 th grade level. Work-related and life skills training are incorporated into instructional content, allowing students to simultaneously improve literacy levels and address employment and life skills issues. Taught by community colleges.
Anger Management	Approach and techniques for this course vary widely, but all programs share a focus of understanding and controlling anger. Primarily taught by contracted educational providers.
Chemical Dependency	Range of treatment options offered in both prison and work-release facilities, including: Treatment Orientation; Primary Treatment (includes intensive inpatient, outpatient and long-term residential programs, and integrates MRT); and Continuing Care (focuses on Relapse Prevention and Transition). Facilitated by certified chemical dependency providers.
General Educational Development (GED)	Basic academic instruction and preparation for the GED exam. For offenders who test above the 8 th grade but below the 12 th grade level. Taught by community colleges.
English as a Second Language (ESL)	Basic instruction in speaking, reading, and writing for non-native English speakers. Content incorporates work-related and life skills topics, as well as facility rules and operations. Taught by community colleges.
Job Dynamics & Transitional Linkages	Covers a variety of topics, including resume preparation, practice interviews, conflict resolution, vocational counseling, liaison with correctional industries, and referrals to community prior to release. Taught by Corrections Clearinghouse (Employment Security).
Job Readiness	Introduction to basic workplace skills, including industrial safety, job dynamics, computer basics, and work training for special needs populations. DOC-designed course taught by contracted educational providers.
Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT)	Cognitive behavioral education program which teaches individuals higher levels of moral reasoning to improve their decisions about right and wrong behavior. Facilitated by DOC staff and contracted chemical dependency and work release providers.
Relapse Education Program (REP)	Purpose is to teach relapse prevention principles and assist offenders with developing and maintaining relapse prevention plans. Targeted for chemically-dependent offenders.
Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP)	Cognitive behavioral treatment approach with a relapse prevention framework. The primary goal is to help the offender learn to minimize and control his risk. Treatment facilitated by DOC staff.
Transition and Relapse Prevention (TARP)	Pilot educational program for high risk sex offenders in prison and in the community. Purpose is to teach relapse prevention principles, assist offenders with developing relapse prevention plans, and encourage them to engage in formal sex offender treatment. Taught by DOC staff.
Victim Awareness Education	Designed to teach offenders accountability for their actions and empathy for their victims. Designed by DOC, and taught by DOC staff and contracted educational providers.

Appendix 4

Inmate Availability for Education and Work Programming:

Who is considered unavailable to program in work and education?

Exemptions	2010*	DOC	JLARC
Inmates with physical or mental medical impairments (permanent or temporary)	X	X	X
Inmates in Segregation or Protective Custody	X	X	X
Inmates on death row	X		
Inmates in IMUs		X	X
Inmates in Sex Offender treatment programs**	X		X
Inmates in Mental health treatment programs**	X	X	X
Inmates housed in reception facilities (WCC and WCCW)		X	X
“In-Transit” inmates: awaiting assignment		X	X
Residential Chemical Dependency programs**			X
Number of Inmates***	1,773	2,813	3,118

* HB 2010 required all inmates to be enrolled in either a work or education program, in order to receive earned release time and qualify for privileges. The law exempts some special inmate populations.

** Some inmates in these treatment programs participate in education and work on a limited basis, and thus JLARC considers them eligible to program on a *part-time* basis.

*** Based on FY 97 ADP.

**Appendix 4
(Cont.)**

**Inmates Available for
Education and Work Programming**

Facility Name	FY 97 ADP*	Unavailable Population**	Total Available Population	Percent of Inmates Available for Ed & Work Programming
AHCC	1564	231	1,333	85.2%
CBCC	864	200	664	76.9%
CCCC	272	6	266	97.8%
CRCC	402	9	393	97.8%
LCC	163	4	159	97.5%
MICC	1305	236	1,069	81.9%
MICC (WEC)	205	2	203	99.0%
PLPR	339	126	213	62.8%
OCC	351	16	335	95.4%
TPR	168	3	165	98.2%
TRCC	912	353	559	61.3%
WCC	1,846	1,334	512	27.7%
WCCW	602	109	493	81.9%
WSP	2,302	350	1,952	84.8%
WSR	716	139	577	80.6%
Total	12,011	3,118	8,893	74.0%

*Average Daily Population. Source: Research and Planning report 10/28/97. (Pre-Release data received 5/1/98.)

** Includes inmates in reception, on permanent and temporary medical/mental disability, "In transition," in segregation, and IMUs.

Note: Some inmates in the SOTP, SOC and in PLPR treatment programs participate in education and work on a limited basis, thus JLARC considers them eligible to program on a part-time basis.

Appendix 5

Percent of Available Offender Time* Spent in Education and Work Programming

	AHCC	CBCC	MICC	TRCC/S OC	WCC	WCCW	WSP	WSR	CCCC	CRCC	LCC	OCC	PLPR	TPR	MICC- WEC	Overall Average
Education Programs																
<i>Basic Skills</i>	7.8%	13.4%	9.8%	16.7%	17.2%	15.0%	8.3%	12.4%	5.5%	8.5%	8.1%	5.9%	10.7%	11.4%	10.3%	10.5%
<i>Crime-Related Programming</i>	1.2%	0.8%	0.6%	0.0%	1.0%	11.0%	3.0%	0.0%	1.5%	1.2%	3.2%	1.4%	8.2%	10.1%	40.3%	3.1%
<i>Vocational Skills Training</i>	4.6%	9.0%	3.2%	6.8%	8.1%	11.7%	4.0%	8.8%	3.9%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	4.2%	0.0%	5.0%
Subtotal Education	13.6%	23.1%	13.6%	23.5%	26.3%	37.8%	15.2%	21.2%	10.9%	10.9%	11.3%	7.2%	21.0%	25.7%	50.6%	18.6%
Work Programs																
<i>Class I</i>	4.9%	0.0%	0.0%	9.9%	1.6%	16.1%	0.8%	12.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%
<i>Class II</i>	8.1%	14.8%	15.1%	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%	17.4%	35.3%	18.5%	7.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%	0.0%	11.4%
<i>CII - Community Service</i>	4.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%
<i>Class III</i>	53.4%	51.4%	45.8%	61.7%	61.2%	46.1%	34.0%	61.2%	33.8%	55.2%	74.5%	60.1%	50.6%	30.3%	188.3%	52.4%
<i>Class IV</i>	4.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%	0.1%	0.0%	29.6%	0.0%	40.7%	46.0%	2.2%	11.5%	0.0%	4.8%
Subtotal Work**	74.6%	66.2%	61.0%	71.6%	62.9%	68.8%	52.2%	108.6%	81.9%	88.5%	115.2%	106.1%	52.8%	48.5%	188.3%	75.3%
Percent of Available Hours Spent in Education and Work	88.2%	89.3%	74.6%	95.0%	89.2%	106.5%	67.5%	129.8%	92.8%	99.4%	126.5%	113.3%	73.8%	74.2%	238.9%	93.9%

* Available time is defined as 30 hours per week for available offenders

**Overall total includes 126,844 hours categorized as Class II Administration, Services & Transportation for which allocations were not available.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ENVIRONMENT WITHIN DOC

Appendix 6

During the preaudit survey, the audit team learned that DOC received \$600,000 to conduct a feasibility study to replace or upgrade the mainframe system OBTS (Offender Based Tracking System). Previous studies of the system had estimated that replacement of OBTS would cost over \$18 million.

JLARC contracted with Sterling and Associates to determine, within the constraints of a limited review, if there were compelling issues related to information technology or the feasibility study that needed to be addressed as part of the performance audit.

The consultant's report had many positive things to say about DOC's efforts, however three recommendations for potential legislative follow up were noted in the attached letter from Sterling and Associates. The first recommendation was to put the OBTS feasibility study under Department of Information Services DIS oversight to provide additional insurance that alternatives would be analyzed, time and cost estimates are reasonable and that constraints are fully considered.

In response to the report, the JLARC Executive Committee notified Joe Dear, Chair of the Information Services Board, of the consultant's findings and requested his assistance on project oversight. The attached letter from Mr. Dear dated December 15, 1997, notified JLARC that he and DOC Secretary Joe Lehman concurred with the recommendation and that the study would be put under DIS oversight.

To link to this appendix, and appendix 7, click [here](#).