

## *Overview*

Local jails and holding institutions present one of the most perplexing, confusing and generally misunderstood areas of the entire criminal justice system. Jails are a crucial component of the justice complex because they represent the systemic hub where law enforcement, the courts and corrections interface through a maze of complicated process. It does not come as a surprise that scholarship in the field of basic jail description and analysis is curiously lacking.

**Among the institutions and programs of the corrections system, jail is the one most neglected by scholars and officials and least known to the public.**

(Clear & Cole, p. 143, 1997)

Jails are generally viewed as extensions of the “correctional system” which is firmly grounded, as far as academic research is concerned, in the study of state prisons (O’Toole, 1999). Common conventional wisdom suggests that since both prisons and jails are penal institutions, they both comply with those principles related to incarceration that have been meticulously reviewed by scholars trained in the analysis of prison systems. However, as O’Toole notes, many assumptions associated with state prisons are invalid when applied to county or local jails. They may lead to faulty conclusions and improper policy orientation. It is therefore imperative that some degree of academic focus be directed toward local jails rather than generalized “correctional institutions” (O’Toole, 1999).

Much of the negative image articulated by Clear and Cole may be attributable to the lack of an institutional identity for local or county jails. From a historical perspective, jails predate other forms of incarceration because public safety has always required that, when warranted, the accused be separated from society while the justice process proceeds. Other correctional objectives such as rehabilitation, deterrence or punishment evolved later. The original British *gaols* were managed by the county sheriff whose primary function was to enforce the King’s Law and keep the peace (Kadish, 1983).

Today, most county sheriffs still view law enforcement as their primary duty while the responsibility for jail management is all too often relegated to inferior subordinates or maintained with reluctance. The typical county sheriff and his or her deputies have little interest in corrections or jails (Clear & Cole, 1997; Moynahan & Stewart, 1980). In systems where the jail staff is comprised of licensed law enforcement officers, assignment to jail duty is usually considered less glamorous, boring or even demeaning (Peak, 2001). Funding agents (county commissioners or supervisors) likewise often view the jail with disdain. No organized lobby or influential interest groups advocate increased spending for jails. Perhaps, from a political perspective, this is because jails have no “sex appeal”. With the exception of reforms initiated by judicial intervention during the 1970’s and 1980’s, local jails often reflect practices and structures dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. This lack of administrative priority and workplace status inevitably leads to a negative institutional environment (Gaines, Kaune & Miller, 2000).

Corrections research has historically been focused on state prisons. While jails and prisons share certain commonalities, they are different institutions. Prisons hold a clearly delineated population, convicted felons. Conversely, jails may hold a combination of felons and misdemeanants, and even some not charged with criminal violations. Prisons hold inmates for extended periods of time, whereas jails may hold some inmates for long time periods and others for relatively short time periods. With a few notable exceptions, prisons represent a rather uniform bureaucracy across the nation. Jails, on the other hand, vary significantly both across and within states. Although most jails are administered by elected county sheriffs, some are organized under the direction of police officials or under the authority of non-police corrections or detention departments (Clear & Cole, 1997).

Generally, jails have not received a high degree of professional regard from scholars in the field. Mattrick and Aikman (1969) refer to jails as “the cloacal region of corrections”. At least one author, John Irwin, describes personnel in the jail environment as detached and disreputable (Irwin, 1985). The respected authorities, Allen and Simonsen, desperately repudiate local jails by advocating a policy based on finding ways to keep people *out* of local jails and still protect the local citizenry (Allen & Simonsen, 1995).

## **The Complexity of Jails**

County jails represent highly complex organizational, administrative and social structures. The diversity of jails and their respective inmate populations further compounds the task of organizing systematic and meaningful study. Consider the following examples of unique issues as they effect the overall conceptual framework of research design and evaluation.

### ***Severity of Criminal Charges***

Contrary to popular misconception, jail inmates do not represent only those charged with lesser crimes. A typical large jail will simultaneously house prisoners from “hot check” writers to serial killers. Unlike state prisons, the local jail must accommodate all types of offenders in a single facility or, at best, in a limited choice of a few facilities. Proper segregation of inmates by risk category in housing, programs and other endeavors is imperative (Austin, 1998).

### ***Dynamics of Prisoner Turnover***

The jail inmate population is constantly changing as a function of the ongoing processing required by the institution. This reality impacts every phase of operations. Consider the concept of the average daily population (ADP). The average daily population (ADP) is a baseline figure used extensively in prison research. The ADP, as calculated for a jail, has a completely different meaning than that calculated for a state prison. On average, a jail’s turnover is about 12 to 15 times that of a prison. A prison with an ADP of 1000 will serve about 1500 prisoners on an annual basis, while a jail with an ADP of 1000 will serve approximately 8000 individuals annually (O’Toole, 1999).

### ***Facility and Process Definition***

The essential definitions of a “facility” and a “process” must be developed as they apply to a specific jail (Beck, 1997). A typical jail construction project is presented as an example. Policy-makers often compare construction costs to determine the best value available, but comparisons may not always measure “apples against apples”. Questions such as, “Should the structure include the capability of processing incoming inmates?”, “What is the proximity of the structure to other agencies such as the district attorney or courts?”; and “Will the facility maintain on-site food and laundry services?” are critical. It is imperative that the decision be based on a thorough understanding of jail operations (Ricci, 1996).

### ***Political Considerations***

Jails are a product of local political process. Since they are inseparably linked to other institutions and agencies in the justice community, they must be considered in the total context of the political climate. To be sure, the county sheriff is responsible for administering the jail system, but the nature of that very system impacts local courts, the district attorney, local police departments, county commissioners, local probation and other interested parties (Clear & Cole, 1997).

It is important to understand that political factors may reach beyond the local level. State law defines the population of any local jail. Any changes in state level justice may necessarily impact the local jail. Tenuous relationships often require negotiation, partnerships, compromise and team oriented approaches to policy development.

### ***Interrelationships of Participating Institutions***

Perhaps the most difficult task facing jail policy-makers is to delineate, analyze and comprehend the internal relationships of the various justice components. The slightest modification of one procedure in a given area of the system may yield unanticipated results in another area. Assume that a court wishes to institute some innovative approach to disposing cases by establishing some alternative community sanction. On the surface this strategy would seem to reduce the requirement of the county jail because more prisoners could be released, therefore, fewer would be tallied in the jail population. In order to properly measure the impact of this policy, one would have to estimate the success rate of the program because those who did not successfully meet the requirements would have to be reentered in the jail population and maintained until proper revocation was completed. Therefore a program with a relatively low success rate could create additional strains on the jail not anticipated in the original concept.

How significant are the interrelationships of justice agencies? Consider the example of the *Controlled Admissions Policy* of the Texas Department of Corrections in September of 1987 (Keating, 1988). At that time the prison board decided to change its policy of accepting inmates from county jails for admission to the state prison system to a “quota” system wherein each county was given a set number of inmates for transfer. The policy required counties to assume responsibility for maintaining any numbers above the stated quota. In short order, counties experienced overcrowding because of the growing backlogs and lawsuits were filed against the

state. In order to satisfy the legal requirements brought by the civil actions and to avert the pending “prison crisis”, the State of Texas was obliged to restructure its entire justice system (Senate Bill 2335, 1989). The result was the largest and most costly prison expansion in the nation’s history (Fabelo, 1995).

## **Current Jail Research**

It is not accurate to suggest that sufficient jail data are not available for scholarly pursuit or that nothing has been accomplished toward developing intensive jail study. The National Institute of Corrections, Jail Division in Longmont, Colorado has provided outstanding training, research and practitioner networking since the 1970’s. The Bureau of Justice Statistics, the American Jail Association and various state and local reporting agencies continually churn a never ending stream of facts and figures relative to jails and jail inmates. Individual program evaluation and demonstrations based on studies of jail inmates appear regularly in journals and publications. However, most of these data are never related to theoretical construct, policy implication or even common managerial practice. Inmate study is normally completed with a focus toward the individual in spite of the contextual setting rather than in relation to the setting. The purpose of this project is to outline a general scheme by which data relative to local county jails can be transformed into meaningful information for practitioners and academics alike. Further, since jails are organized in accordance with state and local regulations, guidelines and customs, it is often necessary to address problems in the context of state organizations with local solutions.

Some notable exceptions to this research dilemma addressed above are available. A descriptive study of Texas jails was conducted by Professor del Carmen through the Center for Criminal Justice at Sam Houston State University in 1990. del Carmen et al. surveyed local administrators concerning jail issues in an attempt to draw statewide conclusions. The questionnaire consisted of 55 entries covering diverse topics such as personnel and hiring issues, administrative topics such as budget allocations, staff training questions, inmate program issues and issues relating to liability of staff. del Carmen’s report provided administrators and policy makers with an overview of jail status in the state. Unfortunately, no thorough follow-up has been conducted in this area for more than a decade (del Carmen et al., 1990).

The Texas Criminal Justice Policy Council is an independent agency created by the legislature in 1986 to research justice policy for the purpose of formulating advice, direction and consultation to State decision-makers as they develop and implement public policy concerning criminal justice (Fabelo, 1999; Fabelo, 2001). Under the able leadership of Dr. Tony Fabelo, the Council has published numerous studies, reports, papers and computer-simulated statistical models that address many of the issues examined in this study. These works necessarily examine the role of local jails as a component of a broader justice system; but the focus of these studies is state-level policy rather than local institutional practice (Fabelo, 1999).

At a national level, various surveys have been conducted using practitioner questionnaires. (Camp & Camp 2000; Camp & Camp, 1998; Maricopa County, Arizona, 1995) Maricopa County (Phoenix), Arizona administrators began collecting information relative to the nation's largest jails during the late 1970's and developed the *Mega-jail Survey* as an early attempt to compare programs and policies among those jails with inmate populations of 1000 or more (Maricopa County, Arizona, 1995). Obviously, jails in different states represent different

administrative structures and comparisons are subject to liberal interpretation. Although the first surveys may now be criticized from a methodological viewpoint, they did serve as a baseline for subsequent attempts to analyze jails.

Perhaps the most comprehensive surveys of jails are conducted by Camp and Camp in the form of the *Annual Corrections Yearbook*. (Camp & Camp, 2000). This effort lists responses from 122 administrators representing jail systems across the country. The survey has been conducted annually since 1980 and includes a variety of questions under the general topics of inmate population, facilities, budgets, programs and staff. Responses are then grouped into five categories by system size from "largest systems" to "small systems". Information from jails with inmate populations of less than 200 is not included. While the *Corrections Yearbook* provides valuable comparative information, one should be aware of certain methodological considerations that might affect the validity of singular comparisons with any survey questionnaire. A thorough discussion of these considerations appears later in this report.

## Scope of the Study

Jails may also be referred to as lock-ups, holding facilities, workhouses, houses of detention or stockades. Since each state and local government set specific definitions for local institutions, it is necessary to concentrate on those commonalties that may be used to delineate an institutional classification. For the purposes of reasonable management, the project scope of this study will be limited to jails in the State of Texas as defined by statute:

**any jail, lockup, or other facility that is operated by or for a county for the confinement of persons accused or convicted of an offense.**

(Article 5115, Texas Revised Civil Statutes, 1925)

Prior to the 1970's local county sheriffs operated Texas jails without regulation from the state level. Because of US Supreme Court decisions involving jail conditions in that era, it became increasingly apparent that some sort of regulatory mechanism was necessary to avoid excessive federal judicial intervention. As a result, the Texas Legislature established the Texas Commission on Jail Standards (TCJS) in 1975 (Title 81, Article 5115.1 Texas Revised Civil Statutes, 1975) to promulgate rules and regulations for the operation of local jails. The Governor of Texas appoints Commission members and the institution maintains a full-time staff headed by an Executive Director. In addition to conducting annual inspections to insure compliance with standards, the Commission also provides technical assistance, conducts training programs and maintains records and logs of inmate populations in the various county jails. The TCJS provided invaluable assistance in conducting this study. Note that Texas law enforcement agencies often maintain temporary "lock-ups" to hold prisoners charged with municipal violations or class "C" misdemeanors and to hold prisoners charged with more serious crimes until they are transported to the county jail. While these "lock-ups" are often referred to as "jails", they are not regulated by TCJS and are not included in this study. Further, the elected county sheriff operates the typical Texas jail. Four Texas counties contract with private firms to provide certain jail functions. In addition, fifteen counties do not have a criminal population large enough to warrant a full jail operation so inmates are housed in neighboring counties. Since the overwhelming majority of the institutions are administered by the sheriff, the terminology used herein will assume a "sheriff's model" for purposes of discussion.

The present project was designed, at least in part, as a follow-up to the 1990 del Carmen study. By replicating those topics addressed twelve years earlier, it was possible to determine if trends identified in 1990 continued into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In addition to updating an existing study, it was possible to provide additional and more relevant conclusions by structuring the questionnaire to overcome many of the issues subject to criticism that appeared in the original study.

## ***Methodological Considerations***

This study was based on a survey questionnaire mailed to all jail administrators in Texas. Certain assumptions are inherent in any questionnaire study. First, it is assumed that the respondent knows or has access to the information sought. Additionally, it is assumed that a core of essential process is consistent across the population surveyed. In the unique case of local jails, even these fundamental assumptions may be subject to a degree of variation. The following discussion outlines the rationale followed as a guideline for the construction of the questionnaire.

Justice organizations evolve to perform specific tasks within a well-defined political parameter. Therefore, no two local jail systems function exactly the same, even if they are structured in compliance with identical state law and policy (a condition which is obviously not the case in national studies). Terminology varies greatly from region to region and existing regulatory practice often permits wide discretion in policy implementation. It is entirely possible that the researcher, unaware of certain technical subtleties, might err by interpreting data in a manner inconsistent with the intent of the respondent. A few examples are presented to demonstrate how misinformation might easily result from a misrepresentation of reported data. These examples are not all inclusive, but they do address the fundamental methodological issues.

### **Inmate Health Care Services**

Health care issues are extremely important in any jail operation. One would logically want to know the costs associated with inmate health care as a determining factor of jail expenses. Necessary arrangements are made in some local jails to have doctors and nurses come to the jail and make regular "rounds" to provide triage and treatment. The costs for these routine services are usually captured under the sheriff's budget for health care. When additional treatment or hospitalization is necessary, as they inevitably are in larger jails, it may or may not be charged to the sheriff's jail budget. In some jurisdictions, the charges are written off to public health care, another county function for indigents in the jurisdiction. Indigence in a jail setting may not be defined the same as indigence in a non-jail setting. In most cases, the sheriff lacks the resources to investigate each individual to determine if he or she has the means to pay for health care. Therefore, many high cost bills may be written off to "indigent" care and not to the jail. If one arbitrarily compares dollar amounts across jurisdictions, he or she may find some jurisdictions reporting one level of health care costs while other jurisdictions report altogether different levels. Camp and Camp's most recent survey (Camp & Camp, 2000) illustrates the point. Cook County, Illinois (Chicago) reports spending some thirty-two million dollars on medical expenditures for a population of 9490 inmates during 2000 while King County, Washington (Seattle) reports less than ninety-eight thousand dollars for an inmate population of 2833 during the same reporting period. In other words, the Chicago group reports spending about \$3400.00 per inmate per year while Seattle spends only \$34.00 per inmate per year, a one hundred fold difference! Since both systems are large, the medical costs of a few inmates would not, in all probability, bring the average to such diverse reporting conclusions. Notwithstanding typographical errors, the difference must lie in the nature of the information being reported. It is entirely possible that Chicago reports a higher level of health care for inmates through the jail budget. Seattle may provide the higher level of care but not report it through the jail budget.

Uyeda and Prottas (1999) report that administrative officials themselves cannot agree on how health care responsibilities should be structured.

After weighing all relevant factors involved in inmate health care (Uyeda & Prottas, 1999), we have opted to concentrate on general descriptions of delivery systems rather than attempt to report comparative costs associated with providing health care services. It is tempting indeed to speculate on what medical costs could or should be controlled or included in reports, however, necessary background information is not retrievable in a format that guarantees accuracy for comparative purposes. Therefore we must accept the response data as submitted without speculation.

## **Staffing Issues**

The original del Carmen survey asked specific questions concerning departmental budgetary and staffing issues. For example, question one inquired:

**How many paid employees are involved in running your jail?**

(del Carmen et al., 1990 p.7)

Although this question seems straightforward enough, it is open to several interpretations. Should the answer include those individuals employed within the sheriff's department who spend a part of their work time accomplishing jail related tasks but who do not appear on the jail roster? Should persons listed as employees of other county agencies but who work on jail related matters be included as jail workers? Should contract employees be grouped as "full-time equivalent" workers or should a total number of contract workers be included? Different administrators may interpret what may appear as a rather simplistic conceptual inquiry from the standpoint of the researcher in any number of quantitative responses. The point is, the question must be structured in such a manner that every respondent answers the question using the same guidelines. In some instances the problem can be resolved by structuring the questions with delimiting specificity. In other instances it may be necessary to compose a series of follow-up questions to clarify the researcher's intent. Even when these adjustments are made, we cannot assure consistency in response. The respondent may not be fully aware of exactly how other agencies are structured to perform tasks. For example, the administrator may report that the county (non-jail) purchasing office is responsible for processing equipment and material orders relating to the jail. But the administrator does not know if one, two or seventeen clerks and accountants are required for this operation. He or she must choose among "estimating" the correct answer, leaving the question unanswered or referring the question to another administrator. If a similar dilemma exists in several other counties, the survey method runs the risk of having different respondents answer the same question from different viewpoints.

In order to address any discrepancy that might result from the unique reporting practices of one county or another, we developed a more comprehensive questionnaire to yield an in-depth analysis. For example, we devised a series of four questions (numbers 20 through 23) to assess the issue of how many employees "run your jail".

## Accounting Issues

At least five questions in the del Carmen study addressed the issues of departmental expenditures. While we do not question the integrity of reporting administrators, we do note that each county maintains its own accounting system. For example, one county might lump all facility utility costs in an overall county maintenance budget while another county might break out the sheriff's costs individually. It is therefore plausible, and even likely, that individual administrators are reporting different summations in response to the same question. We therefore concluded that budget reporting runs a risk of including information that might skew comparative results as reported. Consequently, we rejected attempts to compare individual jail budgets. Likewise, we rejected attempts to directly compare important expense categories within the overall budget. Consider the following discussion concerning inmate food service. The same rationale might be applied to many examples but we have chosen to highlight this area.

The del Carmen study attempted to assess the amount of budgeted resources used for inmate food service. We concur that this is an important category for expenditure, but we point out that different departments set up the food service operation to comply with different delivery models. One department may include a factor for equipment depreciation while another may not. Accordingly, a vendor contract that does not include equipment depreciation would be subject to future adjustments to compensate for the oversight. In addition, philosophical constructs may be intertwined in the budget process. One might argue that serving smaller portions to inmates and thereby reducing the overall caloric intake of the individual inmate could reduce food costs. However, this approach would not be effective in a department where inmates are required to work and therefore need a greater caloric intake. In theory, any monetary profits derived from inmate work should be applied against the excess food required. Most jails are not equipped to measure such sophisticated nuances.

Another example of extreme variance reported among jails in national surveys involves food service. Camp and Camp (2000) report that Washoe County, (Reno) Nevada allocates \$776,000 per year for food service for 1566 inmates. Ventura County, California, has an inmate population (1434 inmates) comparable to Washoe County, yet it allocates more than three times that amount or \$2,400,000 for inmate food. This suggests that it costs \$.45 per meal in Reno and \$1.53 per meal in Ventura! One must seriously question whether the Reno amount includes all factors involved in food service. If reimbursements are present, they may explain the difference but the reader cannot determine what factors make up the total (Camp & Camp, 2000).

The "average cost per day per inmate" has become an industry standard for comparing different systems. It is customary to summarize all costs, both direct and indirect, and divide by the number of inmates incarcerated to determine an annual value by inmate. When the annual cost is divided by 365, we arrive at a cost per day per inmate. For historical purposes this scheme might prove adequate but it can lead to misinformation if used for predictive purposes. If, for example, we increase the inmate population by 10%, it does not automatically follow that we will necessarily increase our overall costs by 10%. We may find that many programs and services can function perfectly well without increased resources. Our procurement, administrative and classification systems might be able to accommodate the increased population without any adjustment. Other areas such as food and clothing purchased may indeed require additional resources and therefore raise expenditures, but by an amount less than 10% of the total. In this example, one might need to increase the overall budget, but the increase may amount to 4% rather than 10%.

Again, we concluded that assessing raw comparative figures runs a risk of reporting information that is subject to erroneous interpretation. The present study is designed to capture the fundamental systemic design of budgetary and staffing issues. Where possible, we have phrased questions to reduce the probability of reporting information subject to broad interpretation. Further, we have omitted those entries that leave excessive response latitude to the discretion of the individual administrator.

## **Facility Construction**

Another area of frequent confusion is new facility construction or major facility renovation. The typical politician, driven by public opinion concerning jail expenditures, will negotiate to great lengths to secure the best possible value when it comes to facility construction. Even though extreme emphasis is placed on initial capital outlay, the total expenditure for operation during the life span of the facility generally dwarfs building costs. For the purpose of comparative analysis, the jail administrator should be aware of several considerations that may apply to facility construction. While comparative costs of construction may be of interest to planners and decision-makers, we conclude that no definitive positions should be reached unless the analysis thoroughly addresses all relevant issues (Ricci, 1996).

Jail facilities may be either "stand-alone" units or parts of broad justice facilities that house courts, probation or a variety of other official justice units. The jail section alone may contain receiving and releasing components, transportation facilities, administrative areas and a range of support areas; or it may be designed to include inmate housing only. The jail may include a full service kitchen and laundry or it may be designed to have these services "out-sourced". Each of these factors must be considered in the context of a specific structure when comparing construction costs.

The jail may be designed as a minimum, medium or maximum-security facility and may include individual cells, multiple occupancy design or dormitory housing (Ricci, 1996). These factors will inevitably impact final costs. We believe that the types of less secure structures erected during the 1990's may not duplicate slow term depreciation that is characteristic of high security structures erected earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. If this theory proves valid, it will impact long-term costs; however, such impact cannot be estimated at this time. Although new technologies are available for jail construction, many electronic systems have not been tested thoroughly over extended times. The builder runs certain risks by implementing expensive systems that merely add "bells and whistles" without substantive security improvements.

Even professional architects and engineers may be ill prepared to design structures for incarceration. Building sites contribute to the overall costs of new construction. Generally, more remote areas provide considerable savings in land acquisition compared to buildings erected in the heart of a metropolitan zone. Further, remote land often provides unlimited expansion, available parking and the ability to avoid expensive mid-rise or high-rise architecture. However, these savings must be weighed relative to operational factors such as the requirement to transport inmates to centralized courts on a daily basis and the excessive "down time" for arresting officers caused by the additional travel time to "book" offenders (Ricci, 1996).

A variety of financial schemes are now available to county officials planning new jail facilities. In addition to traditional public bonds and certificates of obligation, county commissioner's court may opt for lease-purchase plans, build-operate plans or third party not for

profit management partnerships. While each of these options offers some special advantage, each can also obscure more traditional accounting practices by distorting debt retirement figures. This is not to suggest that creative financing is ethically wrong or improper; it merely confuses any attempt to compare facilities on an equal basis.

Since we recognize that facility needs vary greatly from institution to institution, and since we recognize that different accounting schemes may be applied to construction in a number of ways, we have designed questions to ascertain only what facility capacity is planned and what custody level will be employed. These questions will provide baseline information for the issue of jail construction.

## **Jail Functions Within the Criminal Justice Context**

The reader is cautioned not to draw broad systemic conclusions from the information reported in this study. The local jail is but one small component of a complex justice network. No attempt is presented to evaluate the entire justice system. For example, both the del Carmen and Camp and Camp surveys, as well as the present study, attempt to determine the level of substance abuse programming available within the jail. If the respondent replies that few programs or no programs are conducted, it does not necessarily mean that such programming is not available through other agencies. Nor does it necessarily follow that the subject sheriff's office does not support the inclusion of rehabilitative programming. Texas law provides broad discretion on the part of individual counties, districts and courts in establishing a variety of intermediate sanctioning programs. Opportunities might be available through the local Department of Supervision and Corrections (Adult Probation), or the area courts might take full advantage of state-level offerings such as State Jail sentencing or Substance Abuse Facility Program (SAF-P). The purpose of this study is to provide descriptive information concerning local county jails rather than to draw qualitative conclusions.

## **Inmate Population Reporting**

Another dimension of confusion might result from interpretations of inmate populations. The Texas Commission on Jail Standards requires that all local jails maintain monthly reports of inmate populations by category (TCJS, 1992 through present). Accordingly, we chose to use official reporting documents as a means of capturing population quantities. We then cross-referenced those amounts to other entries reported on the questionnaire. On initial review this seems an almost "fool-proof" method of deriving population quantities; however, a closer review of procedures reveals that some discrepancies might surface when individual categories are scrutinized.

Consider the case of those inmates held for parole revocation hearings (Blue Warrants). When the individual is first arrested, he or she will show a computer "hit" for an outstanding revocation warrant (Blue Warrant). The individual may or may not be charged with an additional crime. The arresting agency will then request a confirmation of the "blue warrant", at which time the Parole Agency (of TDCJ) will verify the validity of the warrant or will notify the agency that the warrant has been dismissed. Depending on exactly when the monthly reporting data are

compiled for submission, the exact figures designating inmate population may vary from category to category.

Some counties leave the initial arrest and filing of criminal charges process to the discretion of the police agent at the scene. Others, such as Galveston and Harris Counties maintain a "district attorney intake" system. By having a prosecutor review the specifics of the case before criminal charges are filed, the county is able to screen those instances wherein probable cause for incarceration does not exist and release the accused individual before he or she is officially entered into the system. The result is a reduced population in the various "pre-trial" categories when an "intake" system is utilized. A casual observer may notice that total inmate populations in such counties are less than those in comparable counties, all other factors being equal.

Monthly reports have evolved over the past decade, as new and more detailed information has become available. In 1998 reports began to record the number of felons convicted of State Jail Felony charges and sentenced to incarceration in the county jail. Prior to that date individuals in that category were grouped in the category reserved for "Convicted felons". In the same year (1998) the monthly report began to categorize those inmates awaiting transfer to the Substance Abuse Facility Program (SAF-P). Prior to 1998 these individuals were classed in the broader category of "Paper Ready". To fully arrive at sound analytical conclusions, the researcher must understand these types of subtleties as they relate to jail inmate populations; otherwise the conclusions derived may be incomplete and misleading.

## **Political Considerations**

The reader must remember that local jails exist within a political environment (Clear & Cole, 1997). As noted earlier, there is little public support for increased jail spending. While the county sheriff is responsible for operating the jail, the county commissioner's court is responsible for providing the financial resources necessary to maintain that operation. As a result, the sheriff is often unable to effect those decisions necessary for the proper operation of the institution. Jail administrators, agents of the county sheriff, are keenly aware of all financial considerations relative to the jail's operation. It is predictable that jail administrators would attempt to be viewed in the best light possible concerning jail expenditures. Certainly, it is not suggested that administrators would report erroneous information. It is possible, however, that those administrators would interpret ambiguities in such a manner that tend to put their institutions in the best light. Again we emphasize that the present study is not intended to rate individual jails against one another; therefore we have refrained from making any comparative judgments.

Prison and jail litigation have reached crisis proportions in many jurisdictions. It is essentially unfair to ask a question, which, if answered honestly, would place the respondent in a position of having to defend an unlawful or unsatisfactory practice in a court of law. In constructing the questionnaire, we have phrased entries in such a manner that these kinds of inquiries are not addressed. For example, we clearly state in the area of inmate health care that the system administrator does not express any medical opinion because he or she is not qualified to do so.

The survey does not address some areas that may be considered politically sensitive. For example, we do not inquire as to how profits from commissary sales are tabulated nor do we ask

how much profit is available from such a program. It is our belief that these issues are best addressed at the local governmental level.

## ***Procedures***

The following procedural steps were accomplished in the preparation of the study.

### **The Establishment of an Advisory Group**

An advisory group was assembled to review entries contained in the survey questionnaire. The nine-member team included practicing jail administrators from both large and medium-sized institutions, office holders of the American Jail Association and the Texas Jail Association, private contractors who provide services to jails, staff members of the TCJS and a former Executive Director of the Jail Commission. Originally, the team considered formal meetings to discuss issues; but as scheduling became critical, members began to communicate information via telephone and e-mail. The advisory group made three notable contributions to the effort.

First, the group expanded the number of entries from seventy-five as originally proposed by the project director to one hundred and sixteen. Most of the additions consisted of asking more in-depth and follow-up questions as a means of defining practices within a narrow range. The result was a more rigidly enumerated definition of each participating agency concerning procedures and practices.

The advisory group was especially sensitive to political controversy. They steered the construction of questions away from those areas that might trigger some sort of political response. Also, they avoided entries that might show a particular agency in a poor light relative to other jail systems. It was clear that the advisory group was more interested in designing a study to assist the typical administrator in performing regular duties than in rating agencies against one another.

Finally, the advisory group recommended a practical rather than theoretical approach. They concentrated on many substantive issues such as assessing the local administrator's opinion of certain delivery systems. They opted for a comprehensive survey to assess all aspects of jail operations. They were especially interested in those systems that increased the overall economy of the institution. We adopted all the changes and recommendations of the advisory group.

### **The Review of Population Reports from the TCJS**

We reviewed existing reports and forms maintained by the TCJS rather than solicit the same information from the local administrator, since these reports outline individual jail populations by category. In addition, we reviewed historical reports to determine if trends could be established for various population issues. Since most researchers agree that jail populations follow seasonal patterns including a downturn in December and January (Friel, 1999; Bodapati & Friel, 1993) we analyzed reports for the month of April from 1992, the year the TCJS began maintaining reports in their current form, to the present. April was chosen because it coincided with our plan to have the questionnaire dated in April and it avoided the winter downward cycle. Please note that some subdivisions of the monthly TCJS report evolved though time. Information was included as it became available.

## **The Development of the Survey Questionnaire Instrument**

After adjustments were incorporated from comments and suggestions made by the advisory group, we devised a 116-question survey to assess Texas jails in twenty-six categories including:

<i>General Philosophy of Operations</i>	
<b>Corrections Philosophy:.....</b>	<b>Questions 1 through 5</b>
<i>Human Resource Issues</i>	
<b>Pay Scales: .....</b>	<b>Questions 6 through 12</b>
<b>Training: .....</b>	<b>Questions 13 through 16</b>
<b>Administrative Organization: .....</b>	<b>Questions 17 through 20</b>
<b>Staffing:.....</b>	<b>Questions 21 through 27</b>
<i>Jail Operations Issues</i>	
<b>Food Service:.....</b>	<b>Questions 28 through 32</b>
<b>Inmate Commissary:.....</b>	<b>Questions 33 through 38</b>
<b>Health Care:.....</b>	<b>Questions 39 through 45</b>
<b>Mental Health Care:.....</b>	<b>Questions 46 through 49</b>
<b>Substance Abuse Programs:.....</b>	<b>Questions 50 and 51</b>
<b>Classification:.....</b>	<b>Questions 52 through 55</b>
<b>Religious Services:.....</b>	<b>Questions 56 through 58</b>
<b>Inmate Education:.....</b>	<b>Questions 59 through 61</b>
<b>Library:.....</b>	<b>Questions 62 and 63</b>
<b>Building Maintenance:.....</b>	<b>Questions 64 through 66</b>
<b>Laundry:.....</b>	<b>Questions 67 through 72</b>
<b>Inmate Transportation:.....</b>	<b>Questions 73 through 76</b>
<b>Management Information Systems:...</b>	<b>Questions 77 through 79</b>
<b>Inmate Telephones:.....</b>	<b>Questions 80 through 83</b>
<b>Visitation:.....</b>	<b>Questions 84 through 87</b>
<b>Recreation:.....</b>	<b>Questions 88 through 91</b>
<b>Inmate Work Programs:.....</b>	<b>Questions 92 through 95</b>
<b>Facility Issues:.....</b>	<b>Questions 96 and 97</b>
<b>Security Practices:.....</b>	<b>Questions 98 through 103</b>
<b>Emergency Response:.....</b>	<b>Questions 104 through 107</b>
<i>Other Issues</i>	
<b>Administrative Issues:.....</b>	<b>Questions 108 through 116</b>

In addressing corrections philosophy and human resources issues, we composed a series of questions designed to succinctly categorize responses into generalized fields. In those areas relating to services and programs, we attempted to structure questions in each category so that the respondent would describe the exact manner by which the institution addressed the subject issue. Next, the respondent was asked to rate the success of the institution in dealing with the issue. Finally, the respondent was asked to rate the importance of the issue relative to the overall operation of the jail. The survey was designed to illicit a "forced choice" response, but additional comments were encouraged.

The survey, along with a brief instructional sheet (see Appendix A) and a letter of endorsement from the Executive Director, TCJS (see Appendix B) were mailed to each jail administrator in the State of Texas from the office of the TCJS. It was our belief that having the study originate in TCJS would add practical credibility to the effort and insure a greater rate of response from the administrators. Respondents were given telephone numbers, e-mail addresses and FAX numbers as encouragement to ask questions as necessary. The respondents were requested to return the completed survey within six weeks. A total of 241 surveys were sent to the 237 Texas Sheriffs who operate local jails as well as four private companies who operate facilities under the auspices of the local sheriff's department.

We grouped all responses into a single unit for initial analysis. We then looked at responses broken down by size of institution to determine if substantial variance was related to one size of jail when compared to another. Jails were grouped as *smallest*, one to 49 inmates, *small*, 50 to 249 inmates, *medium*, 250 to 499 inmates, *large*, 500 to 999 inmates and *largest*, 1000 or more inmates.

Responses were returned from 145 or 60.2% of those institutions surveyed. This represented a return rate of 66.7% among the *largest* category of jails (4 of 6); 40% among the *large* category (6 of 15); 75% among the *medium* category (12 of 16); 53% among the *small* category (35 of 66); and 63.8% among the *smallest* category (88 of 138). Some respondents chose not to answer certain questions; therefore the data reported do not represent the full group of respondents in all instances. Notations are made by response to indicate the number of responses for that particular question. Data were arranged in a database format so they could be retrieved as required for analytical purposes.

We also subdivided the responses into geographic zones to determine if trends in one part of the state were consistent with those in other locations. Texas is a diverse state composed of citizens from various cultural, economic, ethnic and social backgrounds. Local jails reflect the prevailing cultural standards as well legal requirements. This approach proved helpful as we analyzed data relative to matters such as hiring practices, racial and ethnic personnel trends and pay scales. The geographic zones included:

***East Texas:*** The 44 counties of East Texas (See ***Figure 1a***).

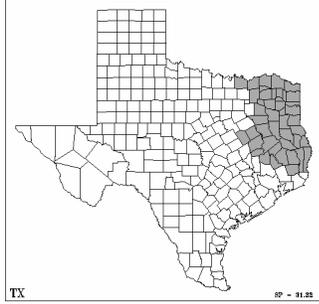
***The Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex:*** Dallas and Tarrant Counties and those 10 counties contiguous to them (See ***Figure 1b***).

***The Greater Houston/Galveston Area:*** Harris and Galveston Counties and those nine contiguous to them as well as the "Golden Triangle" area including Beaumont, Port Arthur and Orange (See ***Figure 1c***).

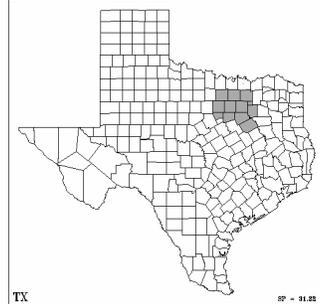
***Central Texas:*** The 44 counties of Central Texas (See ***Figure 1d***).

***South Texas:*** The 52 counties of South Texas including the Rio Grande Valley and counties near the Mexican border in the western portion of the state (See ***Figure 1e***).

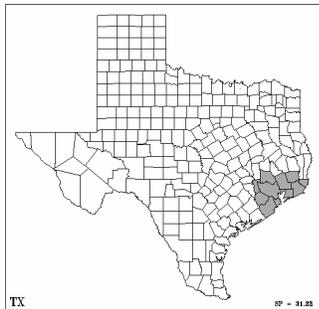
***West Texas:*** The 92 counties of West Texas including the "Panhandle " area and "The High Plains" area (See ***Figure 1f***).



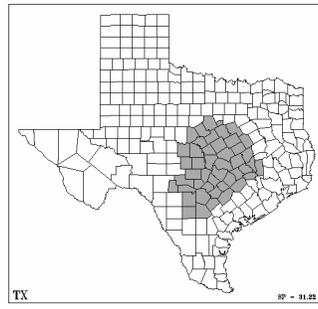
**Figure 1a: The East Texas Region**



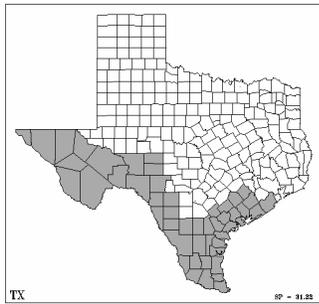
**Figure 1b: The Dallas / Fort Worth Metroplex**



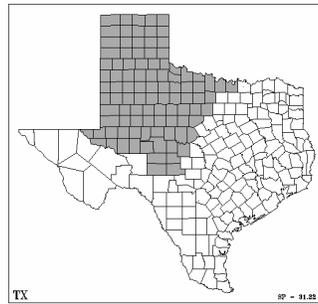
**Figure 1c: The Greater Houston/Galveston Region**



**Figure 1d: The Central Texas Region**



**Figure 1e: The South Texas Region**



**Figure 1f: The West Texas Region**

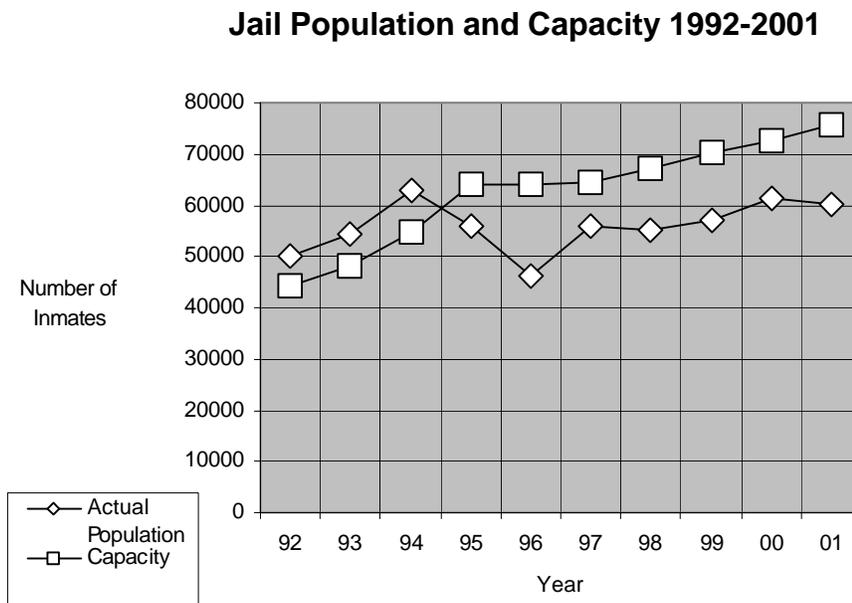
## Findings

The following report details what information was available and how it was treated for analytical purposes.

### Historical Population Trends

Criminal justice experts often define inmate populations as a function of several traditional variables. The occurrence of crime, arrests rates, bail and recognizance release, sentencing practices and administrative policy regulating "good time" and parole all drive the mechanics of jail population trends. In the time frames addressed in this study, the State of Texas underwent fundamental and massive philosophical as well as structural changes in the justice system. These unique historical factors also impacted local jail populations. While a thorough review of the Texas justice system is beyond the scope of this project, major highlights are discussed below to emphasize how jails are interrelated with the larger justice system. Research also indicates the availability of excess jail beds as a commodity for sale to other jurisdictions experiencing overcrowding after 1995, and the emergence of private detention facilities (Bates, 1998). Both contributed to a "roller coaster" effect on jail populations. **Figure 2** illustrates the dramatic changes that occurred between 1992 and 2001.

In 1994, for example, the combined population of Texas jails exceeded design capacity by 8440 or 115% (TCJS, 1994). By 1998, the population had dropped to only 63% of design capacity (TCJS, 1998). The total number of inmates housed in Texas jails rose dramatically between 1989 and 1994. In 1989 the population stood at 39,787 (del Carmen et al.1990) and by April 1, 1994 this figure rose to 62,841, a growth of some 58%. The inmate population actually declined to a low of 46,151 in April of 1996 then began a progressive rise to 61,310 by April of 2000.



**Figure 2: Texas Jail Population and Capacity**

Meanwhile, counties frantically scrambled to expand their respective capacities to house inmates during the early part of the decade. Overcrowding was rampant from 1989 to 1994 and posed a real threat to the fundamental operations of county jails (Martinez, 1995; Fabelo 1995). The number of available beds rose throughout the decade as county after county opened new jails. By 2001, the total number of available beds stood at 75,674 compared to only 44,105 in 1992 (TCJS, 2001) an expansion of 72% during a period when crime decreased considerably!

In order to explain this paradoxical growth, one must carefully examine the individual categories of inmates that compose the total population. In 1992 the TCJS began maintaining an official monthly report on jail populations (see *Table 1*) If one accepts the hypothesis that the prison and jail expansion between 1989 and 1995 contributed to a reduced crime rate in Texas (Carl Reynolds, 2000; Morgan O. Reynolds, 1996), the number of pre-trial inmates in county jails during that period should also have been reduced, assuming that all other factors remained constant. *Table 1* confirms that the total number of pre-trial detainees dropped from 19,685 in 1992 to 16,897 by 1995. However, this trend showed an abrupt change beginning in 1996. By the year 2001, the total number of pre-trial inmates, including the new category of State Jail Felony inmates had grown to 23,387. It should be noted that the Texas Legislature mandated major changes to the penal code in 1993 known as the Texas Penal Code Reform of 1993 (Texas Penal Code Title 1, amended 1993) (Martinez, 1995). The full impact of these changes was not realized immediately. Probably, the combined effects of the State Jail initiative and the Substance Abuse Facility Programs, (SAF-P), made major contributions to the jail population trends that occurred in the later part of the decade.

What may appear as "trends" in the tracking of the criminal justice process may actually be the result of redefining crime through revisions in the penal code. For example, we see a

**Table 1: Texas Jail Population Breakdown: 1992-2001.\***

TEXAS COMMISSION ON JAIL STANDARDS								
Texas County Jail Population								
DATE	FELONS			PAPER READY			PAROLE VIOLATORS	
	Pre-trial	Convicted	Sent to County Jail	SAFP	Less than 45 Days	45 Days or More	Blue Warrant	New Charge
4/1/92	16702	18249			14728		2728	2317
4/1/93	15838	21852			19827		3648	3074
4/1/94	14727	31237			29275		3156	2839
4/1/95	13618	22289			18820		2423	2699
4/1/96	13931	5747	837		2648		1707	1600
4/1/97	14797	6397	1571		3092		3930	2856
4/1/98	14396	6000	2419	553	2677	257	2634	2490
4/1/99	14458	5612	2577	280	2563	132	2423	2571
4/1/00	15040	6638	1757	337	3943	227	2855	2809
4/1/01	15048	5354	1642	366	2542	133	1979	2618

DATE	MISDEMEANANT			FEDERAL	STATE JAIL FELON				TOTAL	
	Pre-trial	Convicted	Bench Warrant		Pre-trial	Convicted County Jail	Convicted			
							State Jail	Others	Population	Capacity
4-01-92	2983	3409	626	3600				689	49966	44135
4-01-93	2654	3487	618	2446				747	54380	47989
4-01-94	2701	3824	556	2568				1196	62841	54899
4-01-95	3279	4672	639	2755				1082	55787	64230
4-01-96	3927	5410	840	3791				5485	46151	64258
4-01-97	4278	6141	1000	4595				6982	55869	64433
4-01-98	4608	5176	1054	6001	2533	446	945	4884	55211	67105
4-01-99	4863	5532	1038	7229	2803	525	1201	2997	57036	70144
4-01-00	4916	6141	1015	8248	3058	1359	1387	2932	61310	72801
4-01-01	5385	5141	1011	9619	2954	796	1224	2683	60171	75614

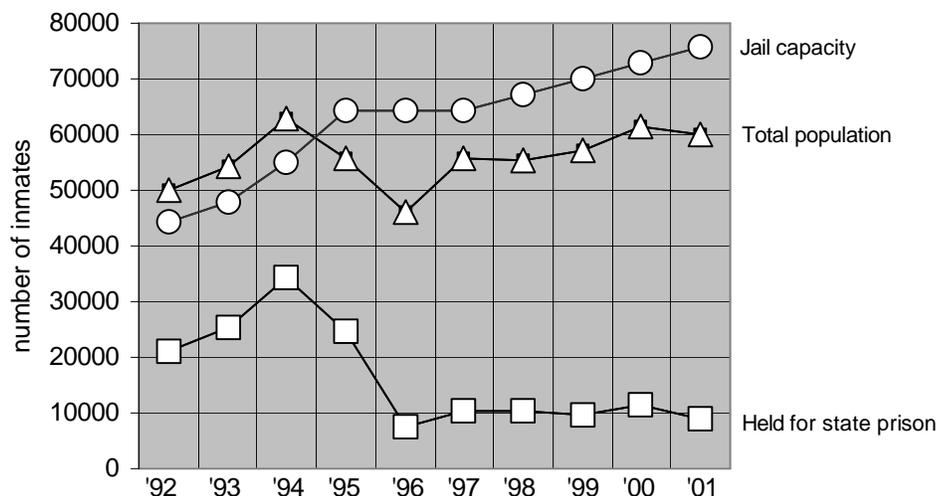
**(TCJS Monthly Jail Population Reports, April, 1992-2001.)**

constant linear rise in the number of pre-trial misdemeanants from 1993 through the present but no such trend holds for pre-trial felons. This category shows a decline through 1995 followed by a stabilizing period from 1996 until present. If one combines the category "pre-trial State Jail Felony" with the existing category "pre-trial Felony", the result is a continuous growth that parallels that of "pre-trial Misdemeanant". In other words, the "trend" is more a function of felony definition than of policy designed to control the incarcerated population.

The most startling information revealed in the early reports is the massive number of inmates housed in county jails but scheduled for transfer to the state prison (See *Figure 3*). By 1994 the "jail backlog", caused by the state's agreement in *Ruiz* (*Ruiz v Estelle*, 1980 as modified 1985) had reached 31,237. Under the *Ruiz* settlement, the state prison was prohibited from exceeding 95% of its design capacity. When the prison population approached this threshold, the state refused to accept additional prisoners from the counties even though the inmates had been ordered to prison by state district courts. This led to two separate lawsuits in 1989; *Nueces County et al. v Lynaugh* (1989) and *Harris County v Lynaugh* (1989). Plaintiffs prevailed in both instances as state courts ordered the State of Texas to pay compensation for inmates held in the counties for excessive time frames. As a result, the state passed legislation in 1991 (Texas Government Code, Chapter 499.121, 1991) that compensated counties for holding state prisoners until the state could increase its capacity under *Ruiz* (Martinez, 1995).

By 1996, dozens of new prisons were opened and the county jail "back-log" was eliminated. The total TDCJ prison population stood at 40,753 in August of 1989. In August of 2000 that figure had almost quadrupled to 151,000 (TDCJ Reports, 2000)! As the prison capacity increased, those convicted felons held in county jails decreased. *Figure 3* indicates that convicted felons awaiting transfer accounted for one half of all inmates held in local jails in 1994 but less than 25% by 1996.

### Backlog of Jail Inmates 1992-2001



**Figure 3: Prison Inmates Backlogged in Texas County Jails, 1992-2001**

Another impact of the state's overhaul of the criminal justice system on county jails concerns the process of parole. Martinez (1995) reports that the state relied on an increasing parole release policy to manage the prison population after 1987. Along with the plan to increase the prison's bed capacity in the late 80's came a collateral strategy to close the "revolving prison door" by requiring prisoners to serve greater proportions of sentenced time. In 1990 more than 79% of those eligible for parole were granted release and by 1998 that percentage was cut to just over 20% (Fabelo, 2000). In 1991 offenders served 18.7% of their sentenced time compared to 50.4% in 1998 (Reynolds, 2000). As fewer inmates were released and as the criteria for release became more stringent, one would expect that the number held in county jails awaiting revocation hearings would decrease. This is because fewer parolees would be in the available pool for possible revocation and because those granted parole under the new guidelines should be less likely to violate the conditions of parole. A reduction did occur from 1993 through 1996 as depicted in *Table 1*, but the downward trend was dramatically reversed in 1997. We conclude that this rise in "blue warrant" jail population was the result of two factors. First, the expansion of the overall prison population from 40,000 to 150,000 in a single decade more than offset the rates of decline in granting parole. In other words, 79% of a fixed proportion of 40,000 is roughly equivalent to 21% of that same proportion of 150,000. Also, certain policy initiatives within the Division of Pardons and Paroles in this time period might have lengthened the time that violators were housed in county jails before hearings were conducted. Note that the number

began to fall after 1997 and stabilized by 1999. To a large extent, this may have resulted from concerns voiced by various county representatives at the time.

By 1996, many Texas counties had expanded their capacity to hold jail inmates by building new facilities. At the same time the state reduced the "backlog" of convicted felons housed in the counties through its own expansion program coupled with the strategies outlined above. This created a completely different set of problems for many county sheriffs and jail administrators. Instead of having too many inmates and the related problems brought about by overcrowding, they were suddenly faced with having to face huge debt retirements while large new cell blocks wasted without inmates to occupy them. In some instances staff members were laid off because their services were no longer needed. By 1996 total jail occupants filled but 71% of the available bed space. A "Goldilocks" mentality of "too many", "too few" "just right" quickly set in.

Local administrators found that their newly constructed jail cells represented a rare commodity as many jurisdictions across the nation were in desperate need of additional housing for prisoners. A number of jurisdictions in Texas began to contract for detention services with out of state agencies, the federal government through the US Marshall's Service or the Federal Bureau of Prisons or the TDCJ itself. By contracting services, the local counties were able to utilize their facilities at a near capacity level and enjoy additional revenues without having to scale back staffing. Other counties opted to build large facilities for the primary purpose of housing large numbers of "contract" inmates and used the revenues generated by the contract to maintain regular jail operations in addition to the "contract inmates". A few examples of this later strategy include: Bowie County with a local jail population of 249 as of February 2001 and facility capacity of 929; Val Verde County with a local jail population of 51 and a facility capacity of 842; Webb County with a local jail population of 282 and a facility capacity of 559; and Comanche County with a local jail population of 17 and a facility capacity of 145 (TCJS, 2001).

By the late 1980's private jails were operating in several states. Enterprising companies saw an opportunity to realize a healthy profit in Texas (Bates, 1998; DiIulio,1988; Logan, 1990) by constructing facilities that could be used for housing the excess persons caught in the growing prison crisis. The TDCJ entered into contract with several companies to house convicted felons and the process remains today.

"Contract prisoners" represent a growing number of persons included in jail reports by the TCJS (Texas Government Code, 1991) even though private correctional institutions do not meet the requirements of a county jail. At the time of this writing, seventeen private firms operated facilities for housing prisoners in the state. Twelve of the seventeen were operating exclusively to house "contract prisoners" while four housed contract prisoners in addition to maintaining a county jail. Reeves County operates a facility that houses only federal prisoners. The Reeves County Sheriff also operates a regular county jail. Williamson County maintains a county jail but some of the local inmates are housed at a private facility.

The addition of "contract prisoners" to the normal reporting of local jail information may tend to skew results and conclusions. As a conceptual matter, inmates contracted from out-of-state agencies or TDCJ-ID are normally convicted felons and therefore display the characteristics of prison populations rather than jail populations. If the researcher omits all "contract prisoners" from consideration, as much as 20% of the entire population of Texas jails is eliminated from the study. In many jails, "contract prisoners" make up a viable component of the overall subculture and therefore should be considered. On the other hand, a few jails are designed to accommodate

"contract prisoners" as the primary clients of the institution. We decided to include all "contract prisoners" as reported in our analysis. The reader should be aware of the unique role of "contract prisoners" in jail situations and of the impact that this group might have on overall reporting data.

**Table 2** charts the number of out-of-state inmates, TDCJ contract inmates and federal inmates held between 1992 and 2001 in Texas jails. Note that the total number of "contract inmates" has steadily increased throughout the entire reporting period although individual contract groups have fluctuated greatly. "Federal inmates" remained fairly constant through 1995 then began an upward trend until the present. This trend may be explained because more housing space became available after 1995 and the federal system allows one of the highest compensation rates available. "TDCJ" inmates follow a different trend. Only selected sites were used prior to 1996 to house these inmates. During that year most available contracts expired. From 1998 to present the TDCJ has contracted with a growing number of private firms as well as local jails to house inmates. "Out-of-state" contracts became popular from 1996 through 1998. Recently, this number has declined, as the other categories (federal inmates and TDCJ inmates held under contract) have grown.

The early 1990's brought dramatic changes to county jails in the form of overcrowding, in some instances extreme overcrowding. Texas opted to completely overhaul its entire criminal justice system and to implement the largest prison expansion project in American history (Fabelo, 1995). After the initial turbulence of these fundamental changes cycled through the

**Table 2. Contract Inmates Held in Texas Jails\***

Date	Out-of-state Inmates	Federal Inmates	TDCJ Inmates	Total Contract	Total Population	Per Cent of Total
4-01-92	0	3600	2169	5769	49,996	11.5%
4-01-93	0	2446	2569	5013	54,380	9.2%
4-01-94	0	2568	3600	6168	62,841	9.8%
4-01-95	0	2755	3683	6438	55,787	11.5%
4-01-96	3861	3791	63	7715	46,151	16.7%
4-01-97	5325	4595	125	10,045	55,869	17.9%
4-01-98	3091	6001	1568	10,660	55,211	19.3%
4-01-99	1147	7229	3141	11,517	57,036	20.2%
4-01-00	734	8248	3169	12,154	61,310	19.8%
4-01-01	225	9619	4570	14,414	60,171	24.0%

(\* TCJS, Monthly Jail Population Reports, April, 1992 through April, 2001)

system from 1991 through 1996, and after the jail "backlog" was reduced, the process stabilized and became more predictable. From 1997 until present, if we adjust for those inmates held through contract, we notice that the Texas jail population has increased at a rate of about two percent per year. Interestingly, this rate approximates the growth rate of the adult population in the state (Texas State Data Center, 1999).

## The Current Population

Monthly Jail Population Reports (TCJS, 2001) as maintained by the state commission represent a "snapshot" of the state's jail population on the first day of each month. Since the population is extremely fluid, the exact numbers are subject to minute by minute variation. Larger systems may receive and release hundreds of individuals each day. Larger systems also reflect a weekly cycle as greater numbers of inmates are usually received on weekends and releases often follow court's schedules. It is therefore possible that populations will be exaggerated in months when the first falls on a Saturday or Sunday and diminished if the first falls later during the week. The first day of April, 2001 fell on a Sunday.

Of the 254 counties in Texas, 239 maintain county jails. The remaining fifteen arrange to have criminals transported to neighboring county facilities as required. Four of these 239 counties contract with private firms to provide a county jail function. In addition, fourteen other private firms operate corrections facilities to house contract inmates for the State of Texas, the federal government or other jurisdictions. One county sheriff, the Reeves County Sheriff, operates a contract facility for federal inmates. An analysis of the April, 2001 Jail Population Report reveals the following information.

*Jail overcrowding is not nearly as critical in Texas jails as it was during the early 1990's.* Of the 239 county jails (including four operated by private firms) in the state, 227 (95%) report no overcrowding at all. The remaining twelve report only minor overages. Two counties report a single inmate over design capacity, one county reports two inmates over capacity, three counties report three inmates over capacity, one four, one six, one seven and one eight. Only two counties report overcrowding of more than ten inmates; Walker County with 12 over design capacity and Grayson County with 17 over design capacity.

*Approximately 39% of the total statewide jail population is made up of persons in a pre-trial status.* Awareness of this information may be important to the jail administrator because the needs of pre-trial inmates often vary from those of the post-trial population. Pre-trial inmates are often subject to release on bond; they may require frequent meetings with attorneys and criminal investigators; or are they may be scheduled to appear in court on a regular basis. Such events and the logistics necessary to accomplish preparatory tasks for their implementation are not required for the post-trial population. However, a closer analysis of the report reveals that preliminary conclusions may be somewhat misleading. The raw numbers that yield 39% are proportionately lower than those derived from the local justice process due to the large number of inmates held through contract with other jurisdictions. Since the total number of inmates held in local facilities includes all contract inmates and since those inmates held pursuant to contract tend to be *post* rather than *pre-trial*, we would expect the proportion of the reported total to be less than the proportion of the total less inmates held under contract. In fact, when all inmates held under contract are eliminated from the population, 51% of the remaining inmates housed are in a pre-trial status. In other words, when we exclude those inmates held under contract, slightly more than one half of jail inmates are pre-trial.

Of the 23,387 pre-trial inmates held in Texas jails, 5385 (23%) are charged with misdemeanors and 18,002 (77%) are charged with felonies. This number includes all degrees of felonies including State Jail Felonies as discussed above. Obviously, this information may be

important in determining inmate classification, in providing inmate programs and in assigning individuals to worker status.

*Female inmates in county jails compose only 11% of those charged or convicted of regular felony offenses but approximately 20% of those charged or convicted of State Jail offenses.* Data were not available to identify inmates by gender in all categories but were included in felony reporting. This suggests that females are more prone to be charged with non-violent crimes and drug related crimes, e.g. those specified as State Jail felonies, than with more serious felonies.

*The state's large county jails house more than two-thirds of all inmates.* The state's twenty-nine institutions housing more than five hundred inmates each, account for 69% (41,679) of all inmates housed in local jails. The seven most populous county jails house approximately 44% (26,273) of all county jail inmates in the state. When the population is adjusted to exclude inmates held under contract, this value jumps to more than one half (51%).

Administratively, jail operations are, to a large extent, a function of size. Different skills and abilities are required to administer large institutions as compared to smaller ones. In an effort to properly consider jail size for analytical purposes, we have divided institutions into five categories by size. The *largest* category includes those with a population of 1000 or more inmates; *large*, those from 500 to 999; *medium*, those from 250 to 499; *small*, those from 50 to 249; and *smallest*, from 0 to 49. Statewide, institutions breakdown as charted in **Table 3**.

**Table 3: Breakdown of Texas Jails by Number of Inmates Housed\***

Category	Number of Inmates	Number of County Jails	Number of Private Jails	Total Institutions
Largest	1000 and more	6	1	7
Large	500 through 999	15	7	22
Medium	250 through 499	16	5	21
Small	50 through 249	66	5	71
Smallest	0 through 49	138	1	139

(\* TCJS Monthly Jail Population Report, April 2001)

*More than one half of the jails in Texas (52%) are in the "smallest"(0 to 49 inmates) category.* A number of administrative challenges confront the small jail operators that are not applicable to those assigned to larger institutions. For example, the small jail can never achieve the level of efficiency expected in larger facilities. The TCJS requires that one corrections officer be available to supervise every forty-eight inmates (TCJS, 1985). In larger institutions, inmates are divided into groups of multiples of forty-eight. If a jail houses fewer than forty-eight inmates, the operator is obliged to staff with at least one officer, resulting in a staffing ratio greater than one to forty-eight inmates, the minimum required by the standard. Smaller institutions do not normally have access to the resources that larger facilities have at their disposal. Often, key staff members are required to perform a variety of diverse functions rather than to concentrate on a single area of expertise. Smaller institutions cannot take advantage of volume purchasing. It is important that the needs of small jails be considered in the context of ongoing operations.

## Survey Part I: Corrections Philosophy

The first section of the survey, *Corrections Philosophy*, addresses the area of general beliefs held by jail administrators. Questions 1 through 5 were designed to assess how jail operators viewed themselves and their institutions in the context of the overall criminal justice system.

Question 1, asked,

**How do jail operations relate to law enforcement functions in your department?**

Possible responses included:

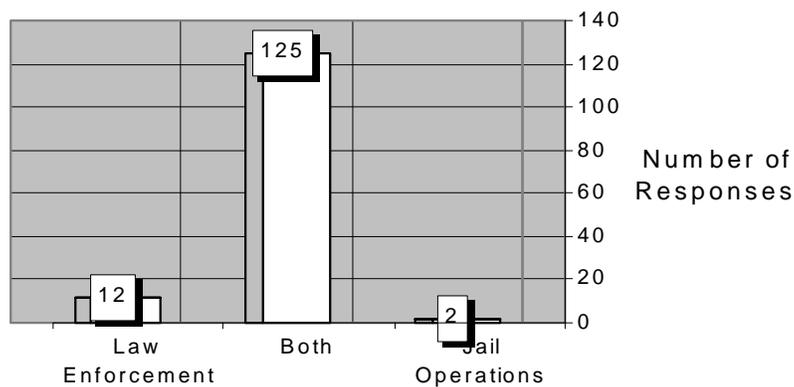
**Law enforcement is the primary function of the department and jail operations are secondary.**

**Jail operations and law enforcement are equally important functions of the sheriff's department.**

**Jail operations are the primary function of the sheriff's department and law enforcement is secondary.**

The overwhelming majority of respondents, 125 (89.9%) replied that both jail operations and law enforcement were equally important; however a small minority, 12, (8.6%) replied that law enforcement was the primary function of the sheriff's department. The remaining two respondents reported that jails were the priority (See *Figure 4*).

**Primary Function of Sheriff's Department**  
**All Jails, N = 139**



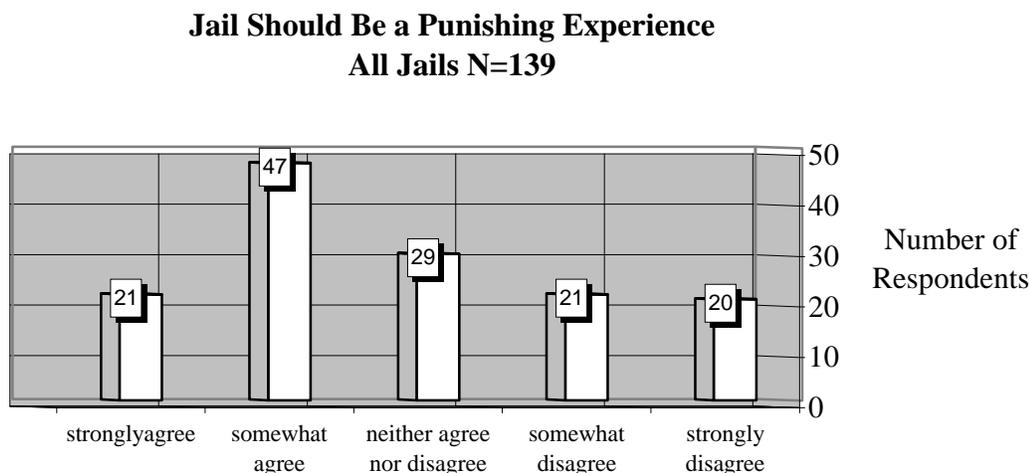
**Figure 4: The Perceived Importance of Law Enforcement v Jail Operations**

Questions two through five of the survey were structured to determine how administrators viewed the overall purpose of corrections. Statements were crafted to express the purpose of incarceration as punishment (Question number 2), deterrence (Question number 3),

public safety or incapacitation (Question number 4) and rehabilitation (Question number 5). A full discussion of these concepts appears in Allen and Simonsen (1995). Each respondent was asked to rate each statement as to his or her general agreement, from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Responses indicated a degree of divergence on the part of respondents. Question 2 asked respondents to rate the following statement:

**Jail should be a punishing experience for inmates.**

Results appear in *Figure 5*. While approximately one half of those polled expressed the opinion that jail should be punishing to some degree (68 of 139), a substantial minority (41 of 139 or



**Figure 5: Jail Should Punish Inmates**

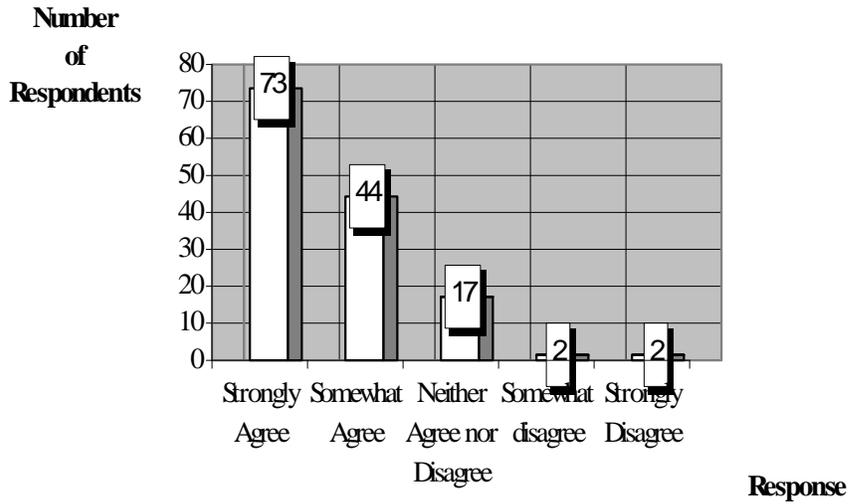
29.5%) expressed the view that jail should *not* be a punishing experience. Approximately 20% (29 respondents) answered that they neither agreed nor disagreed. Even though more respondents felt that jail should be punishing than not, we found no clear consensus regarding this issue.

Question number 3 addressed the issue of jails being a deterrent to other crimes. Administrators were asked to rate the statement:

**The jail experience of inmates should encourage others to obey the law.**

Respondents tended to answer this entry in general agreement; but still, a small number replied that they did not necessarily agree. *Figure 6* summarizes the responses recorded. Note that 17 administrators (approximately 13% of those questioned) responded that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement and another four stated that they disagreed to some extent. While we conclude that most Texas jail administrators concur that deterrence is a viable goal of corrections, many do not, as a group, hold a strong position relative to this issue.

**Jails Should Serve As A Deterrent to Crime: N=138**



**Figure 6: Jail Should Be a Deterrent**

Question 4 was designed to assess general public safety as a goal of incarceration. If the dangerous criminal is locked away in jail or prison, then the public is not subjected to a potential danger from that individual. Jail administrators were asked to rate the statement:

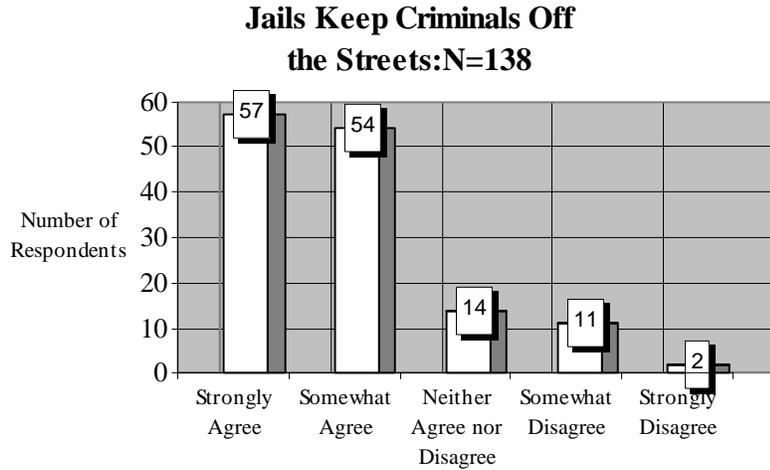
**Jail sentences keep dangerous criminals off the street so they do not threaten the public.**

As expected, a majority of respondents expressed agreement with this statement (See *Figure 7*). Of the 138 responses, a total of 111 (80.4%) expressed agreement with the statement. Approximately 41% or 57 answers noted "strongly agree" while 39% (54 responses) noted "somewhat agree". An unusually high percentage, over 10% (14 individuals) rated the statement as "neither agree nor disagree". Since the statement referred specifically to "jail sentences" rather than all forms of incarceration, it is reasonable to assume that some of the respondents may have interpreted the question as meaning misdemeanants are inherently dangerous to the public. This logic might explain a relatively high neutral response to an otherwise straightforward question. Eleven administrators answered "somewhat disagree" while only two chose "strongly disagree". Results indicate general agreement with the statement contrasted by selective disagreement.

Question 5 addressed the issue of rehabilitation. The statement was phrased,

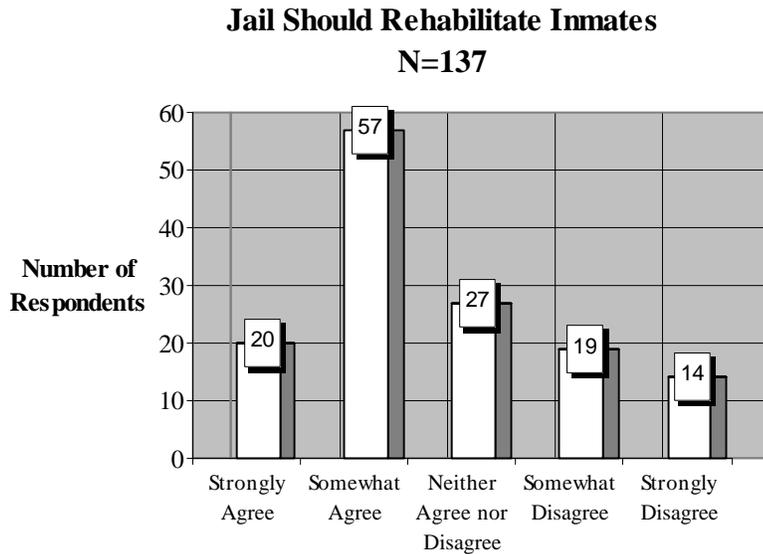
**Jail should be used to rehabilitate inmates.**

More than one half of the administrators (55.8%) agreed with the statement; 20 (14.5%)



**Figure 7: Jail Sentences Promote Public Safety**

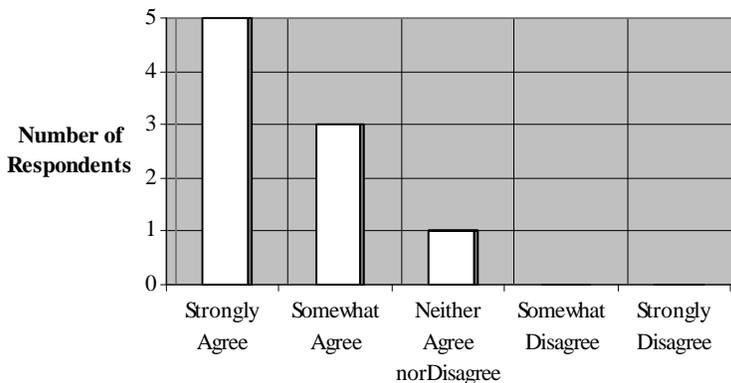
marking "strongly agree", and 57 or approximately 41% choosing "somewhat agree". On the other hand, almost one in four respondents, 33 administrators (24%) disagreed with the statement; 19 (13.8%) chose "somewhat disagree" and 14 (10%) marked "strongly disagree".



**Figure 8a: Jail Should Be Used to Rehabilitate Inmates**

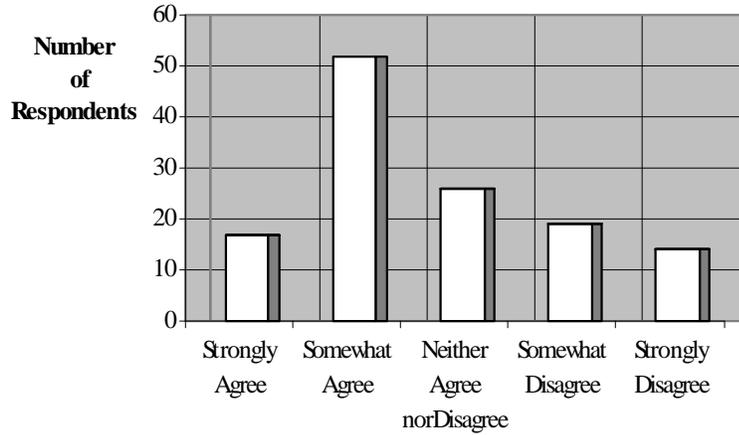
The remaining 27, (19.6%) chose "neither agree nor disagree" (See *Figure 8a*). Several respondents commented that resources were not available to provide proper treatment and inmates seldom stayed in local jails long enough to complete rehabilitation programs. Most of the negative statements concerning rehabilitation came from administrators of small and medium jails. When we analyzed the groups *smallest, small and medium* as a single unit and compared results with those representing the *large and largest* groups as a unit, we found an interesting trend (See *Figures 8b* and *8c*). Jail administrators from smaller institutions seemed divided over whether rehabilitation is a valid goal of the jail institution, but administrators from large jails concurred that rehabilitation is appropriate. Of the 33 respondents that voiced disagreement over jails being used to rehabilitate inmates, none were from the *large or largest* categories. Of the 14 who checked "strongly disagree", nine were from the *smallest* group, three from the *small* group and two from the *medium* group. Of the 19 who checked "somewhat disagree", eleven were from the *smallest* group, six from the *small* group and two from the *medium* group. We do not suggest that administrators of small jails or medium jails disapprove of rehabilitative efforts.

**Jail Should Be Used to Rehabilitate Inmates**  
**Large and Largest Jails: N=9**



**Figure 8b: Jail Should Be Used to Rehabilitate Inmates: Large and Largest Jails**

**Jail Should Be Used to Rehabilitate Inmates  
Smallest, Small and Medium Jails: N=128**



**Figure 8c: Jail should Be Used to Rehabilitate Inmates: Smallest Small and Medium Jails**

Over half of those surveyed from smaller jails agreed that jails should be used for rehabilitation. However, the degree of support for rehabilitation seems to be more prevalent among administrators of larger institutions. Perhaps the lack of program funding in the small jails as mentioned in some of the "comments" section of the survey helps explain why rehabilitation is viewed more favorably by those in the larger jails. Furthermore, those who actually administer such programs may be more likely to favorably rate them.

## Survey Part 2: Human Resources Issues

This section of the study addresses human resources issues. Questions 6 through 27 of the survey focused on various topics including employee pay, corrections training, administrative organization and staffing. The following summary of each issue is presented as an analysis of important topics for the jail administrator.

### *Comparative Pay Scales*

Jail managers were asked to rate the pay of jail personnel relative to that of law enforcement officers. Question 6 of the survey asked:

**Are jail personnel in your department paid equivalent to law enforcement personnel when adjustments are made for seniority and training?**

Alternative responses included :

**Law enforcement personnel are paid substantially more than jail personnel. (More than \$200 per month)**

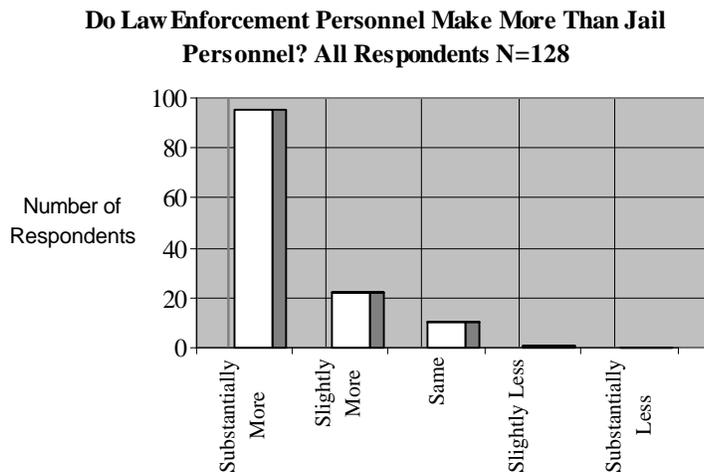
**Law enforcement personnel are paid slightly more than jail personnel. (\$200 or less per month)**

**Law enforcement and jail personnel are paid the same.**

**Jail personnel are paid slightly more than law enforcement personnel. (\$200 or less per month)**

**Jail personnel are paid substantially more than law enforcement personnel. (More than \$200 per month)**

*Figure 9* illustrates the results of Question 6. As expected, most respondents indicated greater pay for law enforcement personnel. Of the total responses, 95 (74%) believed that law enforcement personnel received substantially more, 22 (17%) reported law enforcement slightly more, and 10, (8%) rated their pay as equal. One respondent rated jail personnel as slightly more and none reported jail personnel as substantially more. Even though respondents overwhelmingly saw law enforcement and jail operations as equally important (see Question 1 above), they reported that law enforcement personnel made more money than jail personnel.



**Figure 9: Jail Personnel Salaries Relative to Law Enforcement Personnel**

Questions 7 through 11 asked the jail manager respondents to supply specific salary information for levels of jail personnel from beginning corrections officer through upper level management. The questions were asked as:

- 7) What is the beginning monthly salary for corrections (detentions) officers in your department at entry level before deductions? (Do not include any special incentives that may apply to all officers)
- 8) What is the maximum monthly salary for an experienced corrections (detentions) officer in your department before deductions? (Do not include supervisor salaries; Do not include any special incentives that an individual may receive)
- 9) What is the maximum monthly salary for a first line supervisor (sergeant) in your department before deductions? (Do include any special incentives for which a supervisor might qualify)
- 10) What is your department's maximum monthly salary for a mid-level manager before deductions? lieutenant or captain. Apply captain if it is the highest rank under jail administrator. If the jail administrator carries the rank of captain, enter in number 11 below and enter lieutenant or equivalent in this space. Include any special incentives.)
- 11) What is your department's maximum monthly salary for the upper-level manager before deductions? (Jail administrator, captain or major. Use the highest rank under chief deputy. If the chief deputy serves as jail administrator, enter in this space. Include any special incentives.)

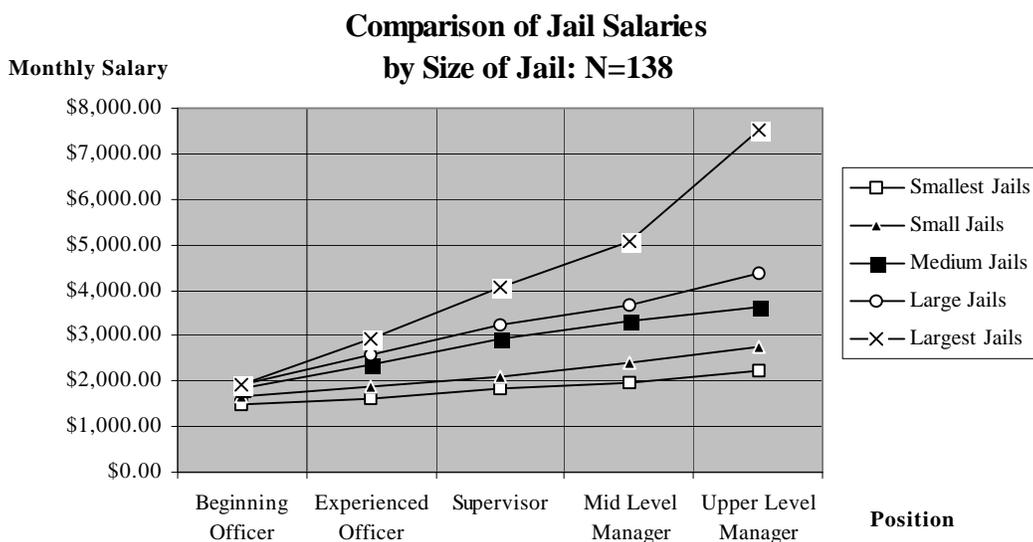
One would expect salaries in all categories to be greater in larger institutions because they involve more complex areas of supervision and management. Further, since larger jails tend to reflect larger cities and metropolitan areas (with the notable exception of those jails with sizable numbers of "contract inmates"), and a corresponding inflated cost of living, one would presume a higher salary level in larger institutions. Salaries were computed for each category then arranged by size of jail as well as geographic region (*Table 4*). When we organized these data into a graphic presentation as shown by *Figure 10*, it became apparent that larger jails were associated with greater pay rates at all management levels. Furthermore, the difference between

**Jail Personnel Monthly Salaries N=138**

Category	Beginning Officer	Experienced Officer	First Line Supervisor	Mid-Level Manager	Upper Level Manager
All: N=128	\$1591	\$1827	\$2212	\$2563	\$2764
Smallest	\$1484	\$1613	\$1826	\$1975	\$2247
Small	\$1651	\$1867	\$2085	\$2407	\$2758
Medium	\$1851	\$2350	\$2928	\$3321	\$3641
Large	\$1940	\$2598	\$3223	\$3691	\$4389
Largest	\$1938	\$2941	\$4085	\$5065	\$7502
East Texas	\$1539	\$1645	\$1877	\$2193	\$2752
D/FW Metro	\$2034	\$2561	\$3298	\$4071	\$4936
Houston Area	\$2034	\$2935	\$3482	\$3994	\$5096
Central Texas	\$1557	\$1865	\$2288	\$2631	\$2609
South Texas	\$1500	\$1737	\$2038	\$2281	\$2565
West Texas	\$1571	\$1734	\$2024	\$2262	\$2348

**Table 4: Monthly Jail Salaries by Size of Jail and Geographic Region**

average pay scales among different jail size classes became greater as management level increased. Note how the scales in **Figure 10** diverge as the management level increases. For example, jails from the *largest* category averaged \$1938 monthly for beginning corrections officers compared to an average of \$1484 monthly for beginning officers from the *smallest* category. This represents an average difference of \$454 per month. When the amounts for upper level manager were compared for the same jail size categories, the difference was found to be \$5,255. These figures suggest that smaller jail systems may not provide the kind of monetary incentives needed to retain qualified jail managers throughout their careers.



**Figure 10: A Comparison of Jail Personnel Salaries By Size of Jail**

Next we compared pay scales among the six geographic locations in Texas. The two largest metropolitan areas of the state, the Dallas/Fort Worth "Metroplex" and the Houston/Galveston metropolitan area showed pay scales considerably higher at all personnel levels than the remaining four regions of the state. These two areas recorded levels well above the statewide average in each management category. Again, the differential between these areas and other geographic areas as well as between these areas and the overall average for the entire state grew progressively greater as management categories increased. While a beginning corrections officer in the Dallas or Houston area might expect a pay rate of some \$400 to \$500 more per month than his or her counterpart in another region of the state; a senior management administrator in the Dallas or Houston region could expect some \$2500 to \$3000 more per month.

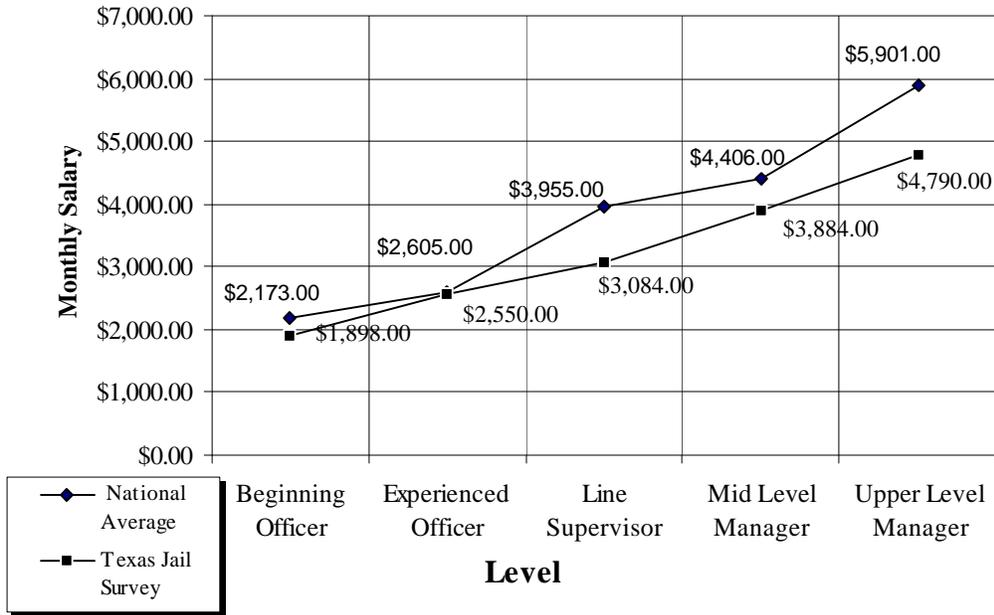
Pay scales in the other geographic regions of the state paralleled those of the statewide average. For beginning corrections officers, the four regions averaged within \$71 per month of one another from a low of \$1500 per month in South Texas to a high of \$1571 per month in West Texas. Experienced officers in East Texas averaged \$1645 while their counterparts in Central Texas averaged \$1865 per month. First line supervisor salaries ranged from \$1877 per month in East Texas to \$2288 per month in Central Texas. Middle managers in East Texas averaged \$2193 per month whereas middle managers in Central Texas averaged \$2631. The highest ranking administrators averaged only \$2348 monthly in West Texas and averaged \$2752 per month in East Texas.

Many of the beginning salaries for corrections staff were extremely low. While some Texas counties experience economic depression and cannot reasonably afford exorbitant personnel salaries, we point out that corrections officers perform a critical task in the justice effort. It is imperative that pay scales be structured to enable minimum standards of living for the recipients. Even more troubling is the fact that many institutions do not offer viable career opportunities associated with experience and demonstrated professional proficiencies. In some instances experienced professionals were not reimbursed with pay substantially above entry-level officers. We recommend that decision-makers carefully consider their jail pay structures.

Next, we attempted to compare the average salary of Texas jail personnel with their counterparts throughout the nation. Source reference material was the Camp and Camp study (2000). Due to technical definitions we were unable to make direct comparisons in many instances. For example, Camp and Camp included only those jails with design capacities over 200 inmates; whereas the present study included all Texas jails, the majority of which were under the 200 limit. We therefore omitted our *small* and *smallest* categories. Further, Camp and Camp reported the "highest" entry in each category as well as the average. Since the absolute highest entry may not be in the range of a reasonable average, we opted to report only the numeric averages within categories. Camp and Camp requested administrative levels as *1<sup>st</sup> in Command*, *2<sup>nd</sup> in Command* etc. while we reported levels as *upper level management*, *mid-management*, and *line supervision*. With these technicalities in mind, we compared the data reported by Camp and Camp with responses from our survey. **Figure 11** illustrates the comparison. Given the semantic differences as discussed above, we concluded that Texas jail personnel salaries were comparable to the national average. As **Figure 11** shows, the national average is slightly higher in all categories, but these minor difference may be associated with interpretations and transposition.

When we compared beginning pay rates for officers with that estimated in the 1989 del Carmen study (del Carmen et al., 1990), we discovered that beginning pay for officers had risen between 2% and 3% annually. Average beginning pay in 1989 was \$1188 per month compared to \$1591 per month in the present study. If one adjusts the earlier rate to take costs of living and inflation into consideration by using an annual rate of 2.5%, the adjusted salary becomes \$1597 per month for the year 2001. When adjusted for inflation, beginning salaries have remained constant over the past decade.

**Comparison of Texas Jail Salaries with  
The National Average: N=138 (Texas Jails)**



**Figure 11: A Comparison of Texas Jail Salaries with the National Average**

***Incentive Pay***

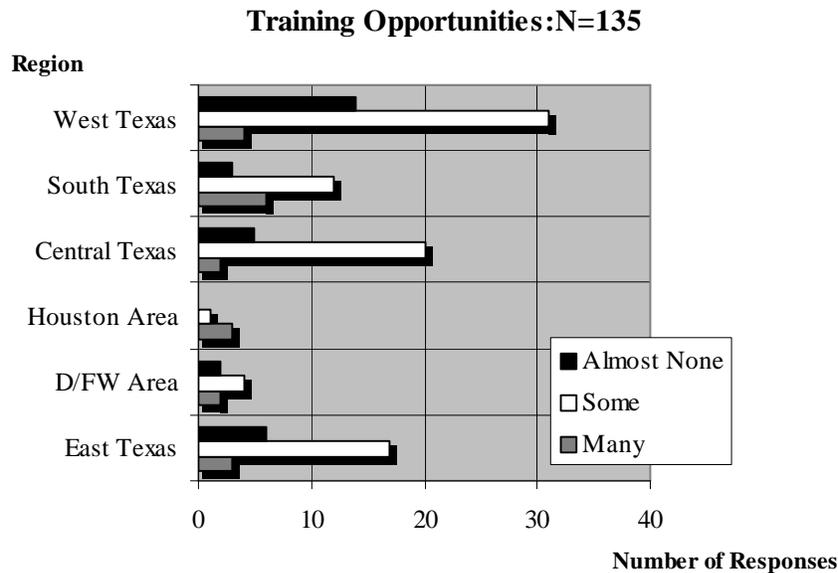
A relatively small number of managers reported that their organizations linked pay incentives to professional proficiencies. Of the 133 respondents who answered this question only 14 (10.5%) responded that they paid officers for special proficiencies. Specific programs included educational achievement, bilingual proficiency, special training, and Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education (TECLEOSE) certification.

The following data indicates our findings regarding special programs. Three counties paid individuals from \$50 to \$100 per month for an associate's degree or 60 semester hours college credit, while six jails paid officers from \$25 to \$150 per month for a bachelor's degree. Additionally six counties paid officers from \$25 to \$300 per month for a master's degree and five jails paid officers from \$25 to \$350 per month for a doctor's degree. For bilingual proficiency three institutions reported paying staff \$50 per month bilingual pay. For special training two jails reported paying staff from \$79 to \$200 per month for various types of special training. Finally,

for TECLEOSE certification twelve departments paid officers \$50 to \$200 per month for levels of certification through the state agency.

### ***Training***

Training for corrections officers presents a challenge for jail administrators. Questions 13 through 16 were prepared to assess issues relative to basic and advanced training. We attempted to estimate the availability of training resources by asking respondents to rate their perceptions of what resources were at their disposal. Administrators were asked the quantity of available training resources (Question 13). Results are shown in **Figure 12**. Responses were grouped according to geographic region and listed as "many opportunities", "some opportunities" and "almost no opportunities". Of the 135 responses, 85 (63%) chose "some opportunities", 30 (22.2%) chose "almost no opportunities" and the remaining 20 (14.8%) chose "many



**Figure 12: Training Opportunities by Geographic Region**

opportunities". We then looked at these responses by geographic region (See **Figure 12**) The more remote institutions tended to choose "almost no opportunities" and "some opportunities" at a greater rate than the metropolitan areas. West Texas, Central Texas, East Texas and South Texas showed a higher proportion of "almost no opportunities" than did the Dallas/Fort Worth area or the greater Houston area. These data suggest that the availability of quality training is less in the more remote areas of the state.

Next we attempted to determine what sources of training were most often used by the local jails. Questions 14 and 15 inquired as to the most prevalent training institution used by the practitioners for both basic officer training and advanced training. Of the 135 respondents, 83 (61.4%) listed external institutions such as "local colleges or universities", "regional academies"

or "consortiums" as the most widely used institutions for basic training. Thirty-six (26.7%) noted that basic training was accomplished internally through the "sheriff's department" and the remaining 14 (10.4%) replied that they used "other area sheriff's departments". Of the 133 responses to the question regarding advanced training (Question 15) 66 (48.8%) listed "colleges or universities", "regional academies", the Texas Association of Counties, the TCJS, Internet courses or correspondence courses as the most used methods of training. Fifty-seven respondents (42.9%) listed their local "sheriff's academy" and the remaining 10 (7.5%) listed "other area sheriff's departments".

We next asked managers if their organization required any formal training for corrections officers in addition to the state mandated high school diploma or equivalency. Only two administrators reported additional requirements; one an entry requirement of 30 semester hours of college course work, and another a 60 hour college course work requirement to be completed within five years. We concluded that little support was advocated for additional pre-service education beyond the existing state mandated standard.

### ***Administrative Organization***

At least two organizational models are available for the Texas county sheriff to structure a local jail. Since the sheriff is responsible for law enforcement in the county, he or she may opt to employ peace officers with dual certification as corrections officers to manage the jail. We refer to this model as *the Deputy Sheriff Model*. Some sheriffs might choose to have the jail managed by corrections officers who do not carry peace officer certification. This is *the Corrections Officer Model*. In Questions 17 and 18 we asked which of these models each jurisdiction used. Question 17 inquired:

**Are members of your jail staff certified as peace officers? (Choose only one answer).**

Respondents were given the following choices:

**All jailer personnel are certified peace officers.**

**New jailer personnel hire on as corrections officers (if they are not already certified as peace officers) but most work toward peace officer certification**

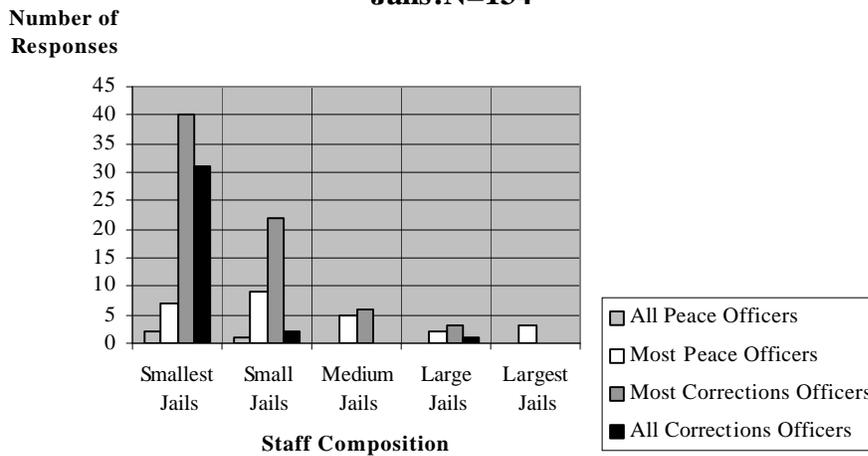
**Most jailer personnel stay in corrections officer status but others may voluntarily work toward peace officer status.**

**Jailer personnel are all classified as corrections officers and do not work toward peace officer certification.**

**Other**

Statewide totals from the survey reflected the use of the *Corrections Model* by a wide margin. Of the 139 respondents, 34 (24.4%) reported all security staff composed of corrections officers. Additionally, 72 respondents, or an additional 51.8%, reported most of the security staff as corrections officers. Only 3 (2.1%) used peace officers exclusively and another 26 (18.7 %) reported mostly peace officers. Four managers (2.8%) replied that their system was some combination of the above. Therefore, the *corrections officer* model was used in 76.3% of the cases surveyed.

**Corrections Officers to Peace Officers in Local  
Jails: N=134**



**Figure 13: The Proportion of Peace Officers and Corrections Officers Used to Staff Local Jails**

The differences appear even more dramatic when we arrange the data by size of institution (See **Figure 13**). The *Corrections Model* was used more often in 81.2% of the cases (95) when the *smallest* and *small* categories were combined. By contrast, the *large* and *largest* categories used the *Deputy Sheriff Model* in 55% of the cases reported. While both models were used in the larger units, the *Corrections Officer Model* was used more frequently in the smaller categories.

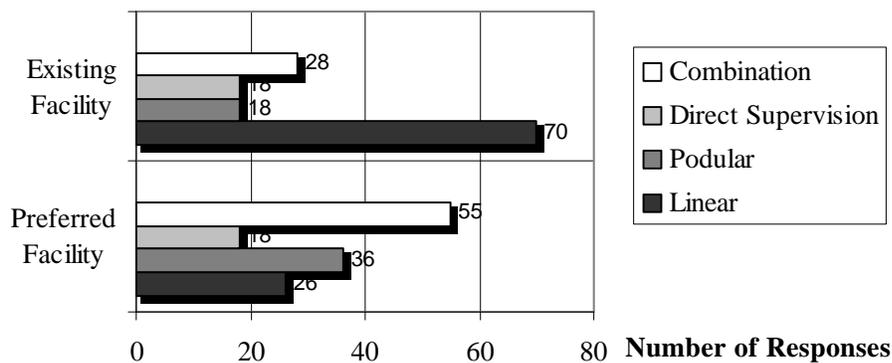
Question number 18 asked if the majority of supervisors in the jail were certified as peace officers. We found that almost one half of the jails had supervisors with peace officer certification. Of the 139 respondents, 28 (20.1%) used peace officers for all supervisor positions and another 36 (25.9%) used peace officers for most supervisory positions. Sixty respondents (43.1%) reported using no peace officer supervisors and the remaining 15 (10.8%) reported a balance between peace officer and non-peace officer supervisors. These data seemed to indicate no clear trend in supervisor experience preference.

**Facility Design**

American jail design is often classified as *linear (traditional)*, *podular remote or direct supervision* (Gaines Kaune & Miller, 2000). We asked administrators the type of design in current jails (Question 19) and their preferred design type for any new facilities (Question 20). Responses are summarized in **Figure 14**. Linear jails were clearly the most common in Texas. Of all responses, 70 (51.1%) indicated a linear type facility in existence. Other types included podular with 18 structures (13.1%), direct supervision with 18 facilities (13.1%), and some combination 28 jails (20.4%). Three respondents classed their jails as "other". Managers were divided concerning their preference for a design. Fifty-five (40.7%) listed "a combination" as their choice. Thirty-six (26.7%) favored podular design, 26 (19.2%) chose linear and the remaining 18 (13.3%) favored direct supervision. Within professional and scholarly ranks, direct

supervision is preferred by many. The National Institute of Corrections has spearheaded a campaign over the past twenty years advocating the use of direct supervision. This view does not

**Types of Existing and Preferred Jail Facilities: N=137**



**Figure 14: Existing and Preferred Jail Designs by Texas Jail Administrators**

seem to be shared by those Texas administrators polled in our survey. Of all choices, *direct supervision* was the least preferred.

***Analysis of Personnel Demographics***

A total cumulative staffing of 8384 employees assigned to the sheriff's jail division was reported in the survey. Several questions regarding position, gender and ethnicity made it possible to divide the group by demographic categories as well as the data base breakdowns of institution size and geographic regions. The following discussion addresses various issues in this general area.

**Gender Issues**

Camp and Camp (2000) report that females made up 33% of the overall jail staffs in the year 2000. Remarkably, the Texas rate was one in three, as females composed 2792 (33.3%) of the 8384 personnel reported in the survey. This figure may be somewhat misleading because females tended to be concentrated in some job positions and sparsely represented in others. **Table 5** summarizes the gender make-up of each reported class of positions. Note that the proportion of females to males varies greatly from one job category to another.

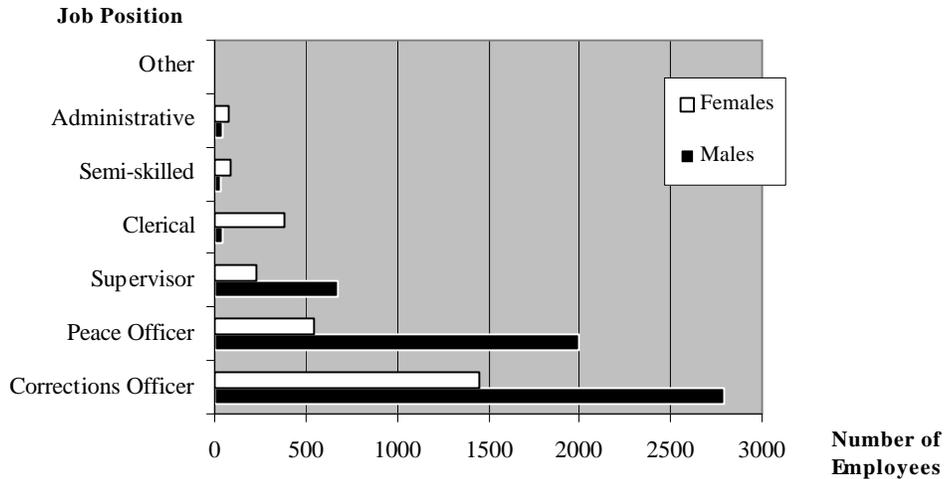
**Gender Analysis: N=138**

	Corrections Officer	Peace Officer	Supervisor	Clerical	Semi-Skilled	Admin/Professional	Other	Total
<b>Males</b>	<b>2794</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>697</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5592</b>
<b>Females</b>	<b>1453</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2792</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4247</b>	<b>2542</b>	<b>905</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>8384</b>

**Table 5: Breakdown of Texas Jails by Position and Gender**

*Figure 15* graphically illustrates the proportion of females in each category. Females were underrepresented in supervisory ranks, 25.2% to 74.8% for males. As one would expect, females were over represented in clerical positions by 89.7% to only 10.3% for males. Females outnumbered males in semi-skilled positions 74.3% to 24.7% and in administrative positions 66.7% to 33.3%.

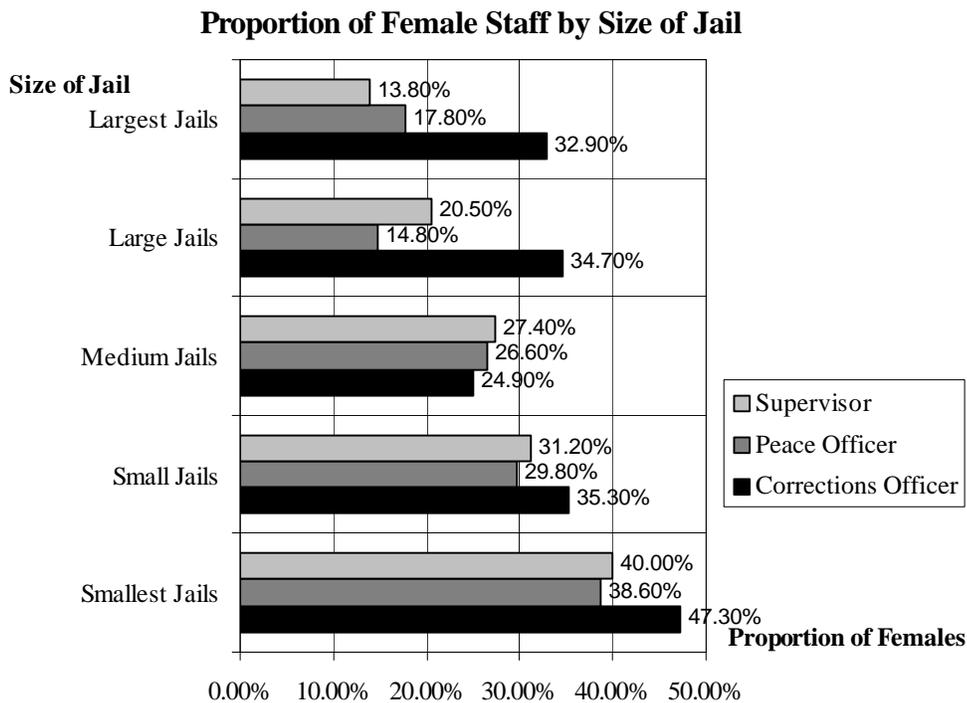
**Comparison of Males and Females:  
Texas Jail Staffs: N=138**



**Figure 15: Gender Breakdown of Positions in Texas Jails**

When we considered the same data by geographic region we noted that most of the categories seemed to parallel the trends shown for the entire state. However, respondents from the Greater Houston/Galveston Region reported only 22 females of 187 total supervisors (11.8%). This compares with a statewide female supervisor average of 25.1%.

A review of gender trends by size of jail yielded an interesting trend. The proportion of female corrections officers, peace officers and supervisors to their male counterparts was greater in the smaller size categories and lesser in the larger size categories (see **Figure 16**). Only 17.8% of peace officers were female in the *largest* category while 38.6% of the peace officers in the *smallest* jails were female. Likewise, females were more likely to be supervisors in the *smallest* and *small* categories than in the *large* and *largest* categories. Of the 135 supervisors in the *smallest* jails, 54 (40%) were female. In the *small* category, 60 of the 192 supervisors (31.25%) were female. In the *medium* category 45 of the 164 supervisors (27.4%) were female. In the *large* category, 36 of 176 supervisors (20.4%) were female and in the *largest* jails, only 33 of 238 supervisors (13.9%) were female. Results indicated that females are more than twice as likely to be employed as supervisors in smaller jail systems than in larger ones.



**Figure 16: Female Staff Positions by Size of Jail**

Females are twice as likely to be peace officers in smaller systems. Although the differences are not as great, females are less likely to be employed as corrections officers in larger systems. Further, since smaller jails have lower pay scales than larger ones, these data suggest that females hold a greater percentage of lower paying positions than do males.

At this point we must emphatically state that the present study does not conclude any bias or discrimination on the part of jail administration. It is entirely possible that social status, intrinsic rewards and economic factors draw women into the applicant pool at a greater rate than men in smaller systems. It is also possible that since women have been employed in corrections in large numbers for a relatively short time (Tewksbury, 1999), they may not have had the time to earn the seniority required for promotion to supervisory ranks. This phenomenon would explain their low standing in the supervisor categories.

## Racial and Ethnic Issues

Jail staff members were divided into ethnic origin categories by job position as shown in *Table 6*. The number in the top of each cell represents the number of individuals reported for each group. (Note that slight differences appear as compared to gender breakdowns as listed earlier in this report. This occurred because some managers chose not to report all demographic information.) The percentage noted at the bottom of each cell represents the percentage of the job position for each ethnic group. The right column sums the number of staff for each ethnic group and the percentage reflects the proportion of the ethnic group for the entire statewide staff. Totals may add to slightly more or less than 100% due to rounding error.

**Staff Positions by Ethnic Group**  
N= 137

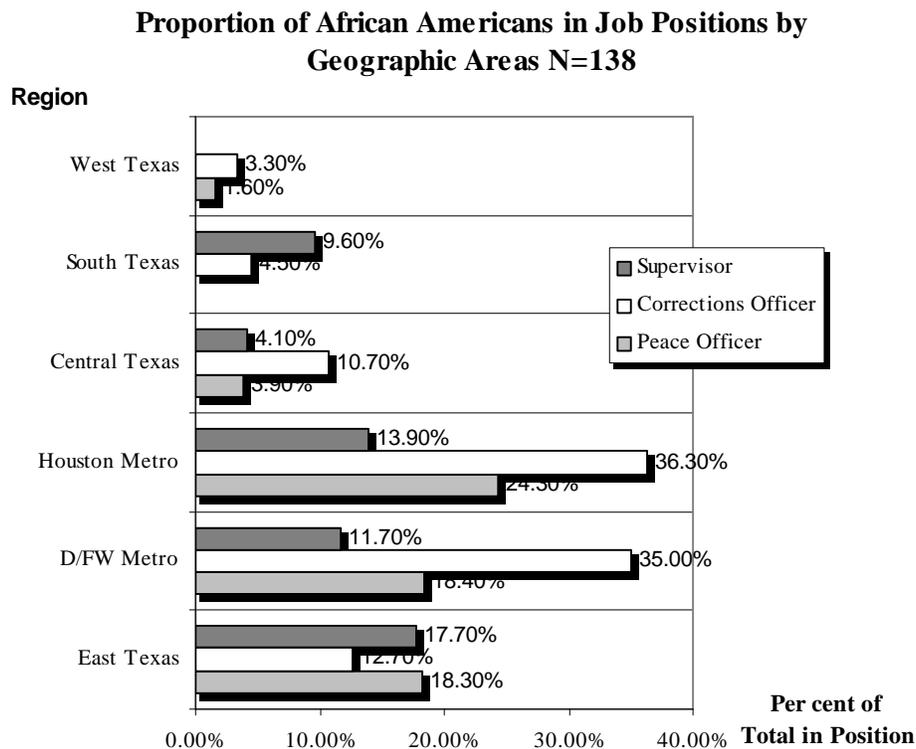
Ethnic Group	Peace Officer	Corrections Officer	Supervisor	Clerical	Semi-Skilled	Admin Professional	Other	Total
African American	466 18.4%	974 24.5%	85 9.7%	86 21.2%	23 20.7%	16 13.4%	4 20%	1654 20.5%
White	1553 61.3%	2410 60.5%	666 75.9%	263 64.6%	65 58.5%	93 78.1%	11 55%	5061 62.9%
Hispanic	465 18.4%	549 13.8%	124 14.1%	56 13.8%	21 18.9%	8 6.6%	4 20%	1227 15.2%
Asian	18 .8%	27 .7%	3 .3%	3 .4%	2 1.9%	2 2.0%	0	55 .8%
Native American	6 .1%	8 .1%	0	0	0	0	0	14
Other	26 1%	14 .3%	0	0	0	0	1 5%	41 .6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2534 100%</b>	<b>3982 99.9%</b>	<b>878 100%</b>	<b>408 100%</b>	<b>111 100%</b>	<b>119 100.1%</b>	<b>20 100%</b>	<b>8052 100%</b>

**Table 6: Statewide Jail Staffing by Ethnic Grouping**

African Americans made up 20.5% of the personnel reported in the survey. Of the 8052 total employees the survey, 1654 were African Americans. Note that only 85 of the 878 supervisors (9.7%) of all supervisors were African American. This suggests an under representation for African Americans in this category. Whites represented the largest group in all categories. Whites composed 5061 (62.9%) of the total staffing. In the category of supervisor, Whites made up 75.9% of the total with 666 supervisors. Whites appeared to be over represented in the supervisor category. The 1227 Hispanics represented 15.2% of all employees. Their numbers were found to be fairly proportional in all job categories. Asians, Native Americans, and "others" represented smaller proportions of the staffs in the survey.

We next considered specific ethnic groups within geographic regions. *Figure 17a* demonstrates the wide variation of African Americans among the different regions African Americans made up some 20.5 per cent of the total staff as reported in the survey. However, when we analyzed their presence by position in the different geographic regions, we found that

they represented as many as 36.3% of corrections officers in the greater Houston area and as few as 3.3% of corrections officers in the West Texas area. No African Americans were reported as peace officers in the South Texas region and only one was reported as a supervisor in the West Texas region. Obviously, certain groups are more prevalent in some geographic areas than in others and employment totals will reflect such distribution. West Texas, South Texas and Central Texas had the lowest concentration of African Americans in all categories while the urban areas of Dallas/Fort Worth and greater Houston had the highest. Note that African Americans were less likely to be supervisors than peace officers or corrections officers in the statewide totals. In Dallas/Fort Worth they accounted for 11.7% of the supervisors but made up 35% of corrections officers. In Dallas/Fort Worth they accounted for 11.7% of the supervisors but made up 35% of corrections officers.

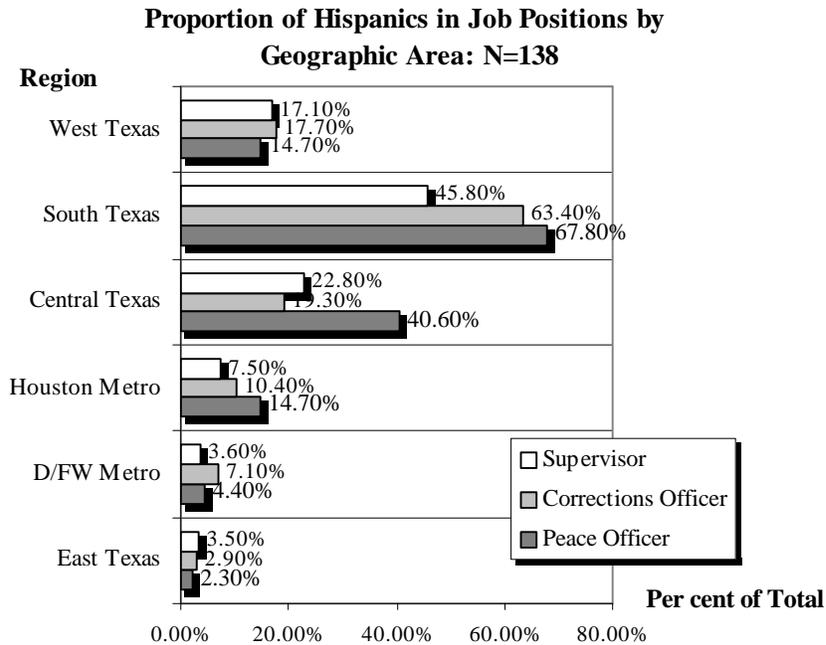


**Figure 17a: Distribution of African American Staff by Geographic Regions**

Part of this phenomenon might be explained by the fact that several large departments have recently conducted recruiting campaigns that targeted African American candidates who have, as yet, not earned enough seniority to be promoted to supervisory ranks. If this hypothesis proves true, the proportion of African American supervisors should rise over the next few years in the metropolitan areas.

**Figure 17b** examines the distribution of Hispanics among geographic areas by job position. Statewide, Hispanics accounted for approximately 15.2% of those employees reported

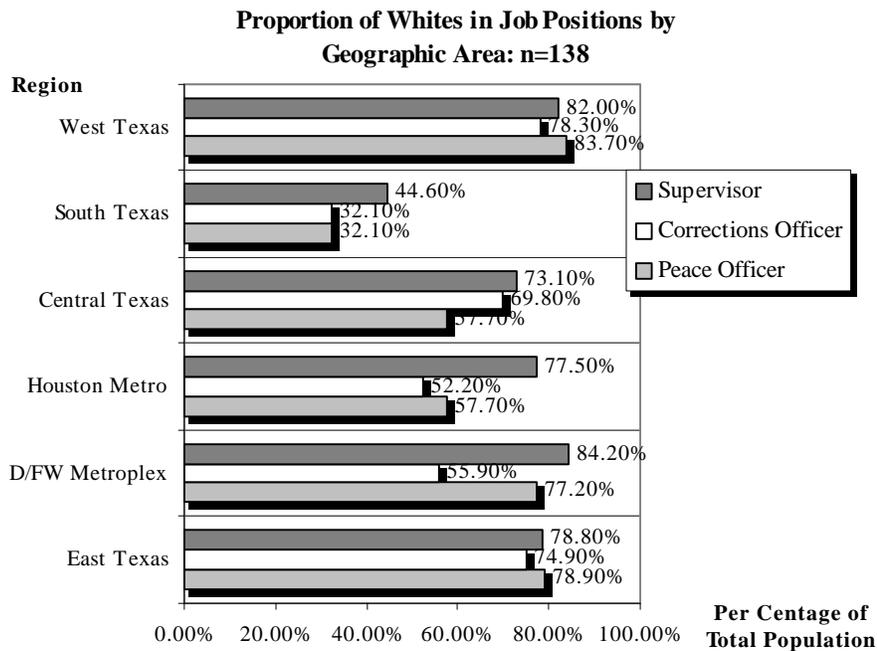
in the survey. South Texas led all areas in the number of Hispanics employed by the state's jails. More than two-thirds (67.8%) of those employed in jails as peace officers in this region were Hispanic. Almost as many, 63.4% of the corrections officers in the jails of South Texas, were Hispanic. Surprisingly, only 45.8% of those reported as supervisors in the jails of South Texas



**Figure 17b: Distribution of Hispanic Staff Members by Geographic Region**

were Hispanic. The Central Texas region showed the next greatest concentration of this group with from 19.3% to 40.6% of the reported classes being Hispanic. Greater Houston reported approximately 15% of peace officers as Hispanic and just over 10% of corrections officers. As we saw with African Americans, the Houston area was characterized by a reduction in minority supervisors. Only 7.5% of the reported supervisors in the greater Houston area were Hispanic. The Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex and East Texas showed the lowest percentage of Hispanics. These proportions ranged from 2.3% for peace officers in East Texas to 7.1% of corrections officers in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex.

Whites composed the largest group in the survey. **Figure 17c** shows the distribution of Whites by job category within the geographic regions of the state as reported. Overall, Whites



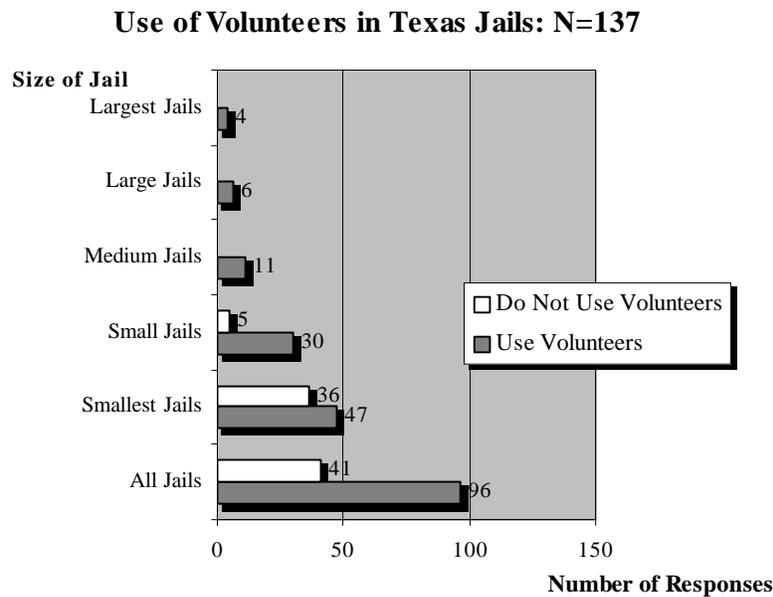
**Figure 17c: Distribution of White Staff Members by Geographic Region**

made up 62.9% of the reported staffs. In the category of peace officer, Whites were in a majority in all regions except South Texas where they accounted for only 32.1% of reported peace officers. Whites clearly made up the bulk of corrections officers in East Texas, Central Texas and West Texas. In the metropolitan regions, Whites composed a smaller portion of corrections officers with 55.9% in the Dallas Fort Worth area and only 52.2% in greater Houston. Whites dominated the supervisory ranks in West Texas (82%), Central Texas (73.1%), greater Houston (77.5%), Dallas/Fort Worth (84.2%) and East Texas (78.8%). It may be noteworthy that White staff members seemed to be represented in greater proportions in supervisory ranks than in other non-supervisory ranks.

White males have historically dominated the field of corrections. Our data suggested that while this group is firmly entrenched throughout the state, substantial inroads have been accomplished toward greater diversity. Women and minorities play a vital role in the personnel make-up of local jails in Texas.

## Volunteer Services

We attempted to determine how Texas jail administrators used volunteers to enhance their operations. Question 25 asked if any volunteers other than sheriff's reserves were used. Of 137 respondents, 98 (71.5%) answered that they did use volunteers while only 41 (29.9%) reported that they did not use volunteers. Further, all *medium*, *large* and *largest* category administrators reported using volunteers while a majority of the *small* and *smallest* category administrators said they used volunteers. We then analyzed the data to determine if there was a significant difference between the propensity for a large jail operation to use volunteers as compared to that of a smaller institution. **Figure 18** illustrates the tendency for larger sized jails to use volunteers. In other words, the *small* and *smallest* jails were less likely to use volunteers than were the *medium*, *large* and *largest* jails. This may be attributable to the fact that smaller



**Figure 18: The Use of Volunteers in Texas Jails**

jails have fewer resources from which to pool volunteers. Furthermore, since smaller jails have fewer inmates, some may decide that the use of volunteers for such a limited role does not justify the logistics necessary to organize volunteer efforts.

The most common use of volunteers was in providing religious support. More than two of three jails (71.5%) reported using volunteers to provide religious programming. About one fourth of the reporting jails, 35 of the 137 (25.5%), stated they used volunteers for inmate education. More than one-third, 49 of the 136 (35.8%), used volunteers in substance abuse programs. Small numbers, five and eight respectively, reported using volunteers for mentoring and inmate health care programs.

Most managers reported that sheriff's reserves were not used for jail duty. Of the 137 respondents, only 22 (16%) answered that they used reserves. The remaining 84% (115 respondents) answered that they did not use reserves. Of those that did use reserves, duties included visitation control, recreation supervision, general jail duties and inmate transportation.

### ***Total Staffing***

As we discussed earlier in this paper, staff reporting for local jails may not always include all personnel necessary for the overall operation. In Question 21 we asked administrators to report the number of sheriff's department employees assigned to the jail division. Question 23 asked the respondents to report those individuals assigned to other divisions of the department who must perform jail functions in order that all operations are accomplished. Question 24 asked if personnel assigned to other county departments were necessary to perform jail functions. By combining all three categories we arrived at a more accurate assessment of actual personnel requirements. Note that this strategy does not account for volunteers nor does it account for individuals working in the jail operation under contract. **Table 7** summarizes the relative contributions of each personnel category by size of institution. The staff assigned to the sheriff

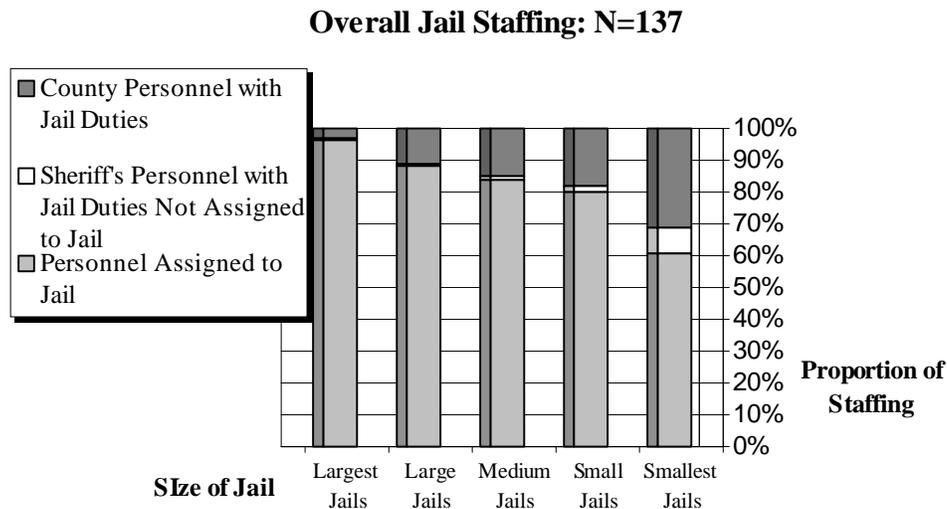
<b>Type of Staff</b>	<b>Smallest</b>	<b>Small</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Large</b>	<b>Largest</b>
<b>Sheriff's Jail Staff</b>	<b>733</b> 60.6%	<b>1178</b> 80.2%	<b>1053</b> 84.0%	<b>1255</b> 88.4%	<b>4362</b> 96.4%
<b>Sheriff's Staff not Assigned to Jail</b>	<b>96</b> 7.9%	<b>24</b> 1.6%	<b>11</b> 1.0%	<b>8</b> .5%	<b>16</b> .4%
<b>County Personnel with Jail Duties</b>	<b>381</b> 31.5%	<b>267</b> 18.2%	<b>190</b> 15.1%	<b>157</b> 11.1%	<b>145</b> 3.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1189</b>	<b>1469</b>	<b>1254</b>	<b>1420</b>	<b>4523</b>
<b>Grand Total: 9876</b>					

**Table 7: Total Staffing by Size of Jail N=136**

makes up a greater proportion of the overall personnel requirement as the institution becomes larger. Conversely, personnel assigned to the other county departments become proportionately smaller as the size of the jail increases. This trend seems to reflect an economy of scale that benefits the larger departments. **Figure 19** illustrates this representation graphically.

While the majority of personnel is captured by those sheriff's employees assigned to the jail division, a substantial number of employees are either sheriff's personnel assigned to other divisions but given jail related duties, or personnel employed by other county departments and

assigned to tasks required by the jail. A clear delineation of staffing patterns is critical in the budgeting and management process. The following example illustrates how a variety of tentative conclusions regarding staffing may be drawn.



**Figure 19: Proportion of Staffing by Size of Jail**

The del Carmen study found that an average of 38 full time plus 1.4 part time employees was required to run jails in 1990 (del Carmen et al., 1990). Our inquiry suggested that an average of 72.62 employees ran Texas jails in 2001. If we assume that the del Carmen figures were drawn proportionately from stratified samples representing all sizes of jails, a cumulative growth in staff of some 84% since 1990 has occurred. The jail inmate population grew from 39,747 in 1989 (del Carmen et al., 1990 ) to 60,171 by 2001 (TCJS, April 2001), an increase of only 51.4%. When we adjusted the del Carmen staffing figure to accommodate the additional inmates at the same staffing rate reported in 1990, we found that the staffing average in 1990 adjusted for the 2001 inmate population was 59.65. In other words, the total staffing requirement by Texas jails grew by 84% from 1990 to 2001 but when the requirement was adjusted for number of inmates housed, the growth totaled only 21.7%. When we omitted those employees classed as "sheriff's employees with jail duty assigned to non-jail divisions" and "county employees from other agencies with jail responsibilities", based on the assumption that they may not have been reported in the del Carmen study, we found that the average requirement increased by only 5.5%.

Next, we adjusted the jail population to exclude those inmates held by private firms and other contracts. Private vendors were not included in our assessment and they did not exist in 1990; however, the numbers of inmates were included in the TCJS Inmate Population Reports (TCJS, 2001). Therefore we reduced the del Carmen population estimate by 3500 to include those federal prisoners held in local jails and we reduced the TCJS 2001 report by the total number of contract inmates or 14,414. Using these revised figures we concluded that the adjusted

jail inmate population grew from 36,147 in 1989 to 45,757 in 2001. This represents a cumulative growth of 26.2% as compared to 51.3% as drawn from the figures including contract inmates. We then adjusted the del Carmen staffing figures upward by 26.6% to accommodate the higher inmate population. This calculation suggested that an average of 49.8 employees would be required in 2001 to manage county jails at the same service level as 1989. Since we calculated the actual average staff in 2001 as 72.62, we concluded that total staffing requirements had risen by 57.9%. When we excluded those persons designated as "other county workers doing jail business" and "sheriff's personnel assigned to other divisions but performing jail duties", we concluded that staffing requirements had risen by only 33.8%.

These manipulations are presented to emphasize the sophistication associated with drawing definitive conclusions from such tentative data. If a policy maker wishes to determine if staffing requirements for maintaining county jails in Texas have reflected discernible trends during the past decade, he or she may come to several conclusions. They have remained relatively constant with a total growth of less than 6% or they have grown at a controlled rate by a total of from 21% to 33.7%. They have almost doubled, reflecting a total growth of 84%. All of these positions are defensible and all are accurate. If one is to base important policy decision on reported facts and figures, he or she is well-advised to carefully consider the conceptual notions captured by the numbers. This brings to mind the famous maxim that Mark Twain attributed to Disraeli.

**"There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies and statistics!"**

(Twain, 1899)

### **Survey Part 3: Jail Operations**

This section of the report considers various operational issues as they impact local jails. Since the jail environment is composed of dozens of social and interactive structures, it is instructive to consider each component in the context of a total living system. We developed the survey to address food service, commissary, inmate health care, mental health services, substance abuse programming, classification, religious services and counseling, inmate education, library services, facility maintenance, laundry, inmate transportation, information management, telephone service, visitation, recreation, work programs, facility issues, security practices and emergency response. The primary focus of the study was to assemble basic descriptive information about Texas jails. To the extent possible the report also provides a basis for comparative analysis. For example, we asked administrators to describe any substance abuse programs that are operational in their institutions. Rather than merely list the results, we also asked their professional opinions as to their scope and effectiveness. In this manner we were better prepared to completely assess their full utility. Such issues may contain profound implications for criminal justice scholars.

Many of the issues were structured to glean information that may be helpful to the practitioner. For example, we asked managers to classify their food service operations by administrative type. We also inquired as to their satisfaction with this arrangement. By providing this cumulative information to all administrators we hope to supply jail managers with useful and helpful assistance as they perform their professional duties.

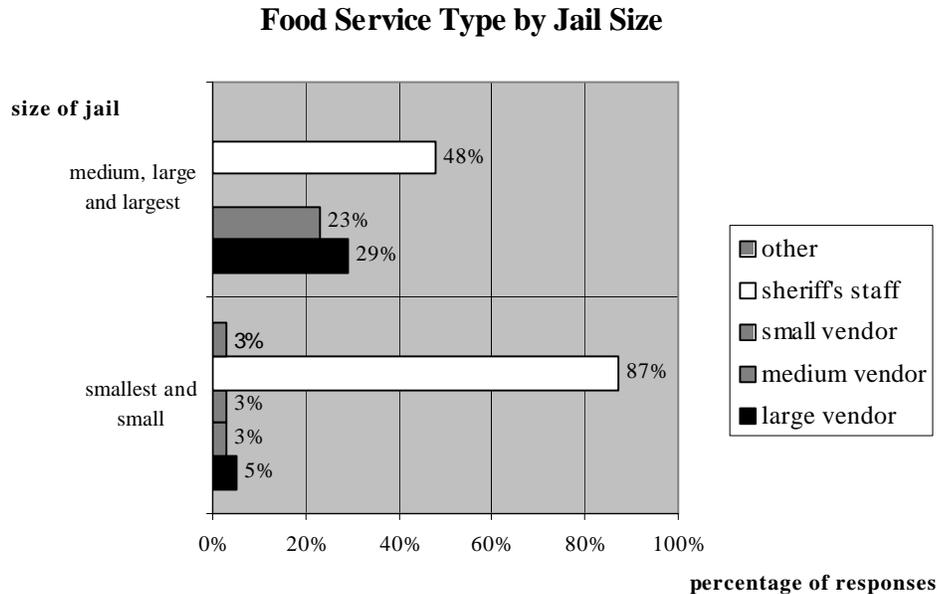
Some of the inquiries were developed from mere curiosity. We asked, for example, what color inmate uniforms were supplied in the facility. It is indeed doubtful that inmate uniform color will ever have a significant effect on criminal justice research. Further, it is doubtful that this information could ever seriously impact professional development for administrators. But it is an interesting question that remains to be answered.

#### ***Inmate Food Service***

Questions 28 through 32 were included in the survey to assess food service operations for inmates in the local jails. Question number 28 inquired as to what type of administrative structure was in place to prepare and serve meals. Choices included service provided by small medium or large private vendors, service provided by sheriff's staff and other arrangements. Question 29 asked if meals were prepared on site within the facility, prepared off site and transported to the facility or some combination of the above. Question 32 asked if meals were served in the inmate living quarters or in a "mess hall" arrangement. Administrators were also asked to rate the importance of inmate food service (question 30) and to rate their degree of satisfaction with the existing operation (question 31).

A majority of local jails utilized their internal staffs for meal preparation. Respondents reported that 113 jail systems (80.7%) used internal sheriff's staff with the assistance of inmate labor for meal preparation. In contrast, 24 systems (17.1%) operated under contract with private firms; three with small vendors, nine with medium-sized vendors and twelve with large vendors. The remaining three administrators reported food preparation in the "other" category. ***Figure 20***

illustrates this result broken down by jail size. Overall, administrators seemed pleased with services rendered. More than half, 54.7% or 76 of 139 assessed their opinion of the food service operation as "very satisfied". An additional 55 (39.6%) rated the service as "satisfactory" while



**Figure 20: Food Service Type by Size of Jail**

only 6 (4.3%) marked their response as "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied". One administrator reported "dissatisfied" and the final respondent reported "very dissatisfied".

No single system seemed particularly more popular than others. Eleven of the twelve respondents reporting service by large-sized vendors rated their satisfaction as either "very satisfied" or "satisfied"; all nine of those reporting medium-sized vendors reported satisfaction and two of the three who used small-sized vendors reported either "very satisfied" or "satisfied". Of the 113 administrators using "sheriff's staff" to prepare meals, 108 (95%) reported satisfaction at some level.

*Medium size jails, large jails and largest jails* were much more likely to contract with private firms for food service than were the *small and smallest* jails (See **Figure 20**). Of the 21 systems reporting in the larger categories, eleven (52%) used private vendors while ten (48%) used internal "sheriff's staff". Of the 114 counties in the *small and smallest* categories, 13 (11.4%) contracted for food services while 101 (88.6%) used the "sheriff's staff". It appeared that service contracts were more economical for larger institutions.

Meals were prepared on site in almost all instances. Of 139 responses, 127 (91.4%) answered that meals were prepared at the facility in question. Ten system administrators reported that meals were prepared off site and delivered and two reported that meals were prepared at one facility in a system and delivered to another facility. Most jails were arranged so that inmates ate in a section of their living area such as a day room rather than in a traditional "mess hall". Reports suggested that 127 of the administrators polled (90.7%) answered that inmates were

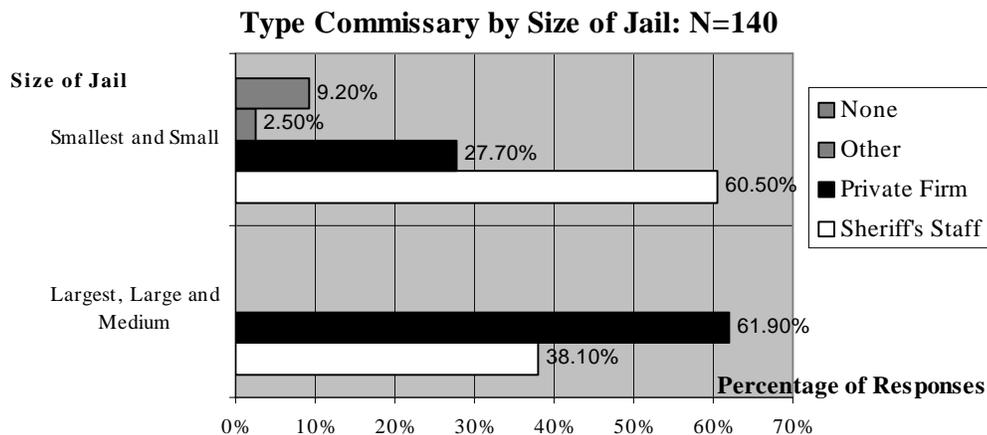
served in living quarters while only seven (5%) reported inmates served in a "mess hall". Six respondents reported a combination of "living quarters" and "mess halls".

Respondents rated food service as an important component of the jail system. When asked the relative importance of food service, 115 (82.7%) of the 139 respondents checked "high importance" while another 20 (14.6%) checked "some importance". Two respondents marked "little importance" and one manager rated food service as "no importance". The remaining manager marked "unknown".

### ***Inmate Commissary***

*Inmate commissary* is the term used to designate the distribution of those approved items that inmates may purchase for personnel use while incarcerated. Various snacks, cosmetics, and clothing goods may be included. The sheriff may establish rules and regulations governing commissary operations. Profits from commissary sales must be applied to inmate welfare. Like food service, inmate commissary is an area that has attracted private vendors over the past decades. We attempted to determine the extent of privatized commissaries by asking each manager to describe the administrative structure of the commissary (Question 33). Further, we asked each manager to categorize exactly how goods were distributed (Question 34) and how often inmates were permitted to purchase items (Question 35). We asked what level of price structuring the jails used (Question 36) as well as our standard "satisfaction" and "importance" (Questions 37 and 38).

Of the 140 respondents who answered the questions, eleven (7.8%) replied that they did not maintain a commissary. Ten of these eleven were in the *smallest* size category and one was in the *small* category. Of the remaining 129 jails, 80 reported a commissary operated by the "sheriff's staff", 46 reported the commissary operated by private vendors and three reported "other". These data seemed to indicate that the "sheriff's staff" model was more popular as a means of operating commissaries by almost two to one. However, a closer analysis of commissary by size of jail suggests a different conclusion as depicted in **Figure 21**.



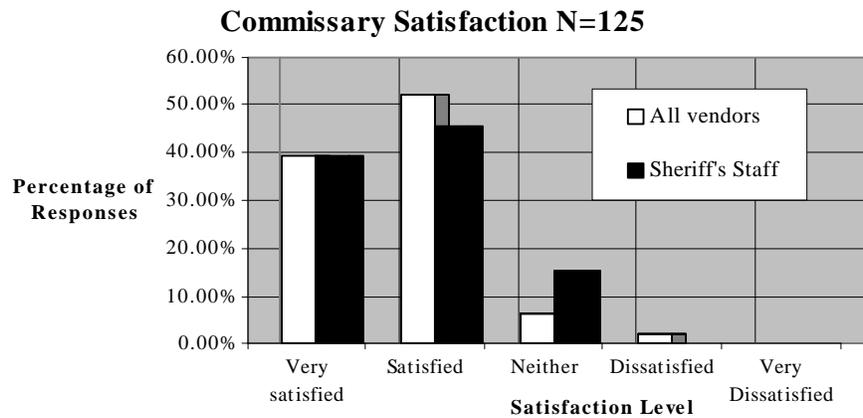
**Figure 21: Distribution of Commissary Type by Size of Jail**

Private commissary operations were found in 27.7% of the cases involving *small* and *smallest* jails, but in 61.9% of those found in *medium*, *large* and *largest* jails. Conversely, "sheriff's models" made up over 60% of the commissaries in *small* and *smallest* jails but only 38.1% of those in the larger classifications. This indicates that larger institutions are more likely to choose private vendors while smaller operations are more likely to provide the service internally.

We next focused attention on manager's satisfaction with commissary operations. Overall, satisfaction with commissary was expressed as:

- "very satisfied" = 49 respondents (36.1%)
- "satisfied" = 67 respondents (49.2%)
- "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" = 16 respondents (11.7%)
- "dissatisfied" = 3 respondents (2.2%)
- "very dissatisfied" = 1 respondent (0.8%)

Note that more than 85% of all respondents expressed some level of satisfaction with their system while only 3% reported levels of dissatisfaction. Clearly, most administrators were satisfied with commissary operations. Did the level of satisfaction vary from those with private vendors to those with internal staffs? **Figure 22** graphically illustrates this analysis. The



**Figure 22: Level of Satisfaction with Commissary; Private Firm and Sheriff's Staff**

expressed level of satisfaction is almost identical between those responses associated with "sheriff's staff" commissaries and "private firm" commissaries. We therefore concluded that private contractors as well as sheriff's employees are able to provide quality commissary operations.

Three basic distribution systems were used to supply inmates with commissary items. The most popular consists of having inmates order items from an inventory list, have staff assemble the items, bill the inmate and deliver items to the inmate at a later date. This process usually takes one to three days although some reported same day delivery. Of the 128 responses received, 102 (80%) stated they used this method. Eleven (8.6%) of the managers reported using

a "cart" system wherein goods were taken to each cell block and inmates chose items from the "commissary cart". The clerk assigned to the cart maintained accounts. A third system consisted of bringing inmates to a commissary area and making purchases and accounting entries at the site. Eight respondents used this system. No single system appeared to be inherently better than the others. Each approach had some advantages as well as disadvantages.

We inquired as to how often inmates were allowed to make commissary purchases. Of the 129 reporting agencies, 77 (59.7%) provided the service once each week; 42 (32.6%) from two to five times per week and nine (7%) on a daily basis. One respondent reported "other". We also attempted to measure the pricing system used for commissary purchase against some recognizable standard. We asked respondents to choose the one pricing system that most closely parallels their commissary pricing system. Choices included "a discount store", "a department store", "a convenience store" and "more than a convenience store". The most common answer given to this question by 86 respondents (72.2%) was "a convenience store". Twenty managers (16.6%) listed "a discount store", seven (5.9%) listed "more than a convenience store" and one listed "a department store". Five administrators listed "other". We therefore concluded that most jail inmates in Texas paid "convenience store" prices for nonessential commissary items.

Finally, we asked respondents to rate the importance of their commissary system relative to overall jail operations. Of the 135 responses received, 71 (52.6%) listed commissary as "high importance". An additional 54 responses (40%) listed commissary as "some importance". Only ten responses (7.2%) listed commissary as "little importance". No managers rated commissary as "no importance".

### ***Inmate Health Care***

No topic is more critical to jail administration than health care. The incredible numbers of offenders that migrate through local jails challenge the most dedicated professionals. To further complicate the matter, one must consider that a large proportion of the inmate population has a history of medical neglect (Maruschack & Beck, 1997). Drug addicts, alcoholics and homeless persons require extensive medical care. Infectious diseases and HIV infection are more prevalent in offender populations than in the general population (Maruschack, 2001). It is therefore imperative that administrators adopt effective health care strategies to provide proper medical treatment.

In order to assess general health care issues we developed a series of questions designed to determine the degree of care available in each jail system. Obviously large systems require a greater amount of resources than do smaller ones. The reader is cautioned that the number of resources allotted to health care may be a function of system size rather than quality of care. For example, a jail with ten to twelve inmates would never require a full time physician on staff. An "on call" doctor might well be appropriate for such a system. Therefore we cannot conclude that the size and diversity of a system's professional staff is necessarily indicative of quality health care. The staffing design does, however, give us a point of comparative reference for describing health care systems. Question 39 was phrased as:

**Which of the following statements best describes your inmate health care system?**

**We have a full medical staff including physicians on duty in the jail at all times.**

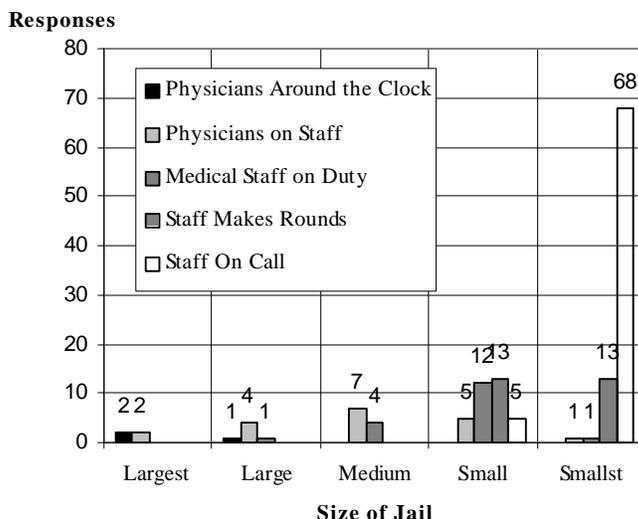
**We have a medical staff on duty at all times and physicians are on duty or on call at all times.**

**We have a medical staff on duty most of the time. If needed, they are on call.**

Physicians and nurses make rounds in the jail. If required, the inmate is transferred to a clinic or hospital.  
 Medical personnel are on call as needed. They do not make regular rounds.  
 Other (Please explain)

Figure 23 illustrates a breakdown of health care units at local jail facilities by descriptive type. The most common system consists of having medical staff "on call" so that inmates can be

**Health Care Type by Size of Jail N=139**

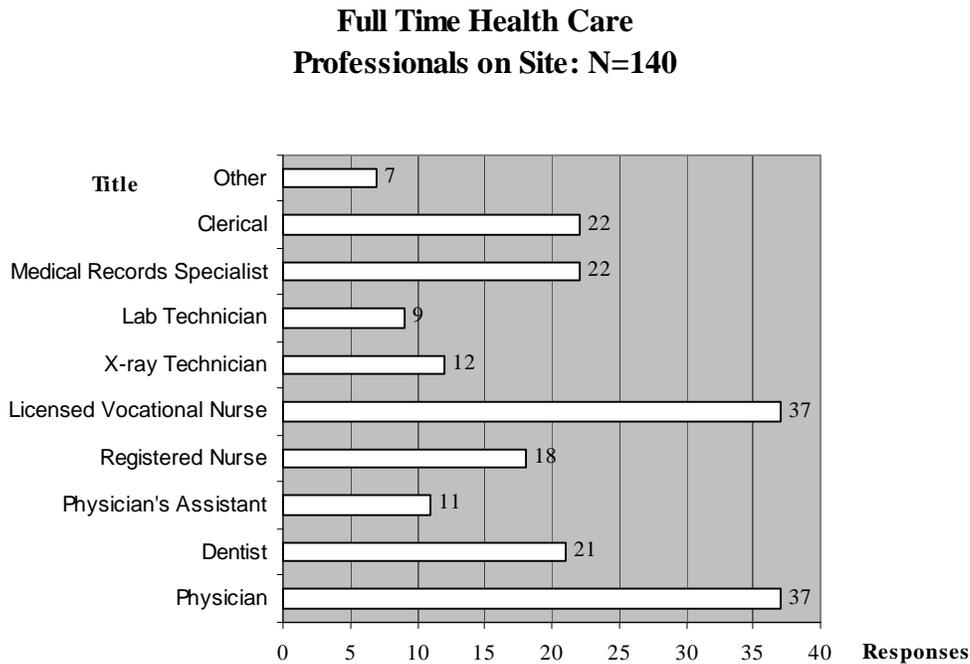


**Figure 23: Health Care Delivery Type by Size of Jail**

transported whenever need arises. Usually this system includes some type of existing contract or agreement with local health care professionals. Inmates may be examined at the jail or transported to a clinic or hospital. The *small* and *smallest* jails may opt to have professionals make periodic rounds in the jail to check on inmates. *Medium* and *larger* jails employ or contract for medical staff on the jail premises. The number of inmates in the facilities usually determines the size and complexity of health care staff. A limited staff may be available as designated in **Figure 23**, "Medical Staff on Duty". Under this plan, a number of professionals are assigned to the jail and provide treatment as appropriate. If the inmate requires treatment beyond their capacity, appropriate referrals and transport are arranged. Of the 139 respondents, 19 answered that full time physicians were assigned to the facility. Most of these jails fell in the larger categories. Normally, physicians work set hours and remain "on call" during "off duty " hours. Three jails reported physicians assigned around the clock to provide the highest level of medical coverage on site.

Question 40 asked the administrators to verify the type of full time health care professionals employed or contracted by the jail system at the facility. **Figure 24** presents the number of facilities reporting by each position. Of the 139 agencies that answered this section, 37 reported full time physicians, 37 licensed vocational nurses, 22 clerical persons, 22 medical records technicians and administrators, 21 dentists, 18 registered nurses, 12 X-ray technicians, 11 physician's assistants, 9 lab technicians and 7 "others".

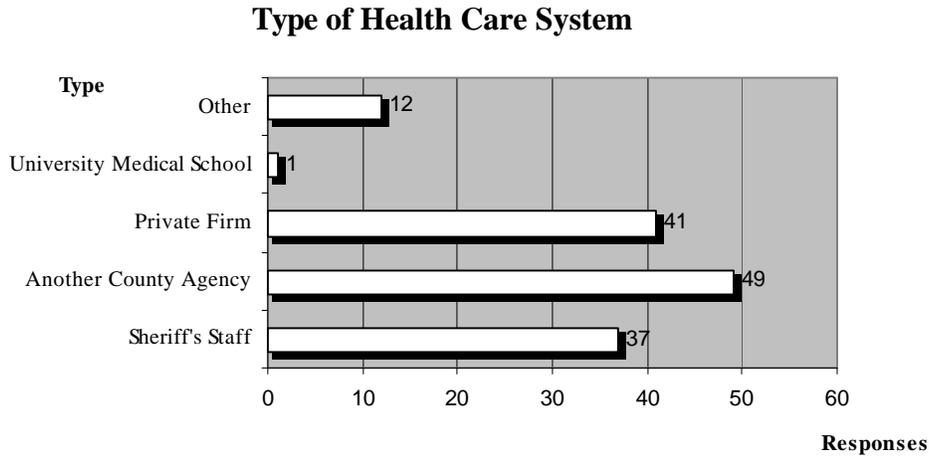
Question 41 confirmed that jails employed a variety of health care administrative structures (See *Figure 25*). Forty-nine jail systems used another county agency such as the county health department or hospital district to supplement efforts. Forty-one used private



**Figure 24: Full Time Health Care Professionals  
on Site at Local Jails**

medical services, firms and contracts. Thirty-seven established medical personnel within the sheriff's staff and one jail contracted with a university medical school. Twelve respondents reported "other" which, by the "comments section", indicated some combination of the above.

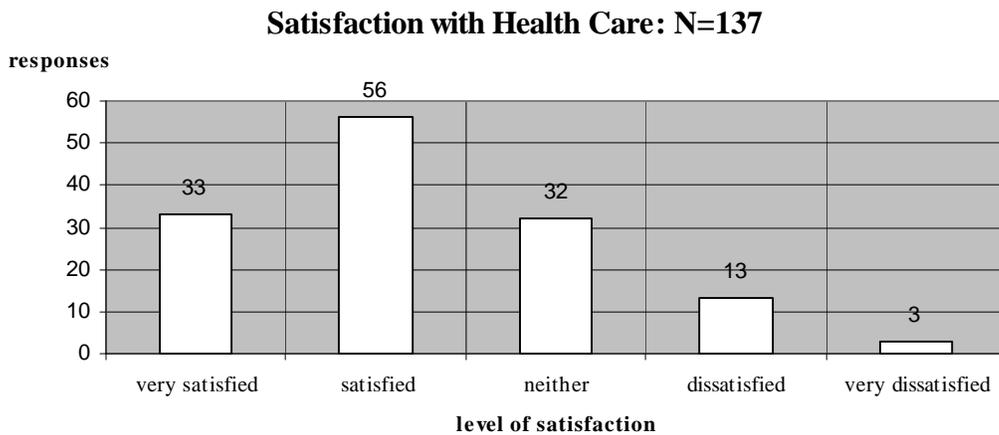
We asked respondents to comment on whether or not certain specific health care services were provided to their inmates. Question one (number 43a) asked if inmates received testing and/or counseling for AIDS/HIV. Eighty-seven of 139 managers (62.3%) replied that this service was available. Question two (number 43b) asked if substance abuse treatment was available. Only 56 of the group (40.3%) answered in the affirmative. Question three (number 43c) asked if dental services were available. Ninety-eight respondents (69.8%) answered "yes". The final



**Figure 25: Type of Health Care System Used in Jails**

question in the series, number 43d, asked if optometry services were available. Only 40 administrators (28.8%) replied that these services were available. It is probable that inmates assigned to different jurisdictions receive a differential level of health care.

Administrators rated inmate health care at an extremely high level of importance (Question 45). Of the 137 respondents who answered this entry, 110 (80.3%) marked "very important". The remaining 27 administrators (19.7%) marked "some importance". No managers chose "little importance" or "no importance". Given the high importance of health care it was interesting how administrators rated their satisfaction with health care (See **Figure 26**). Of the



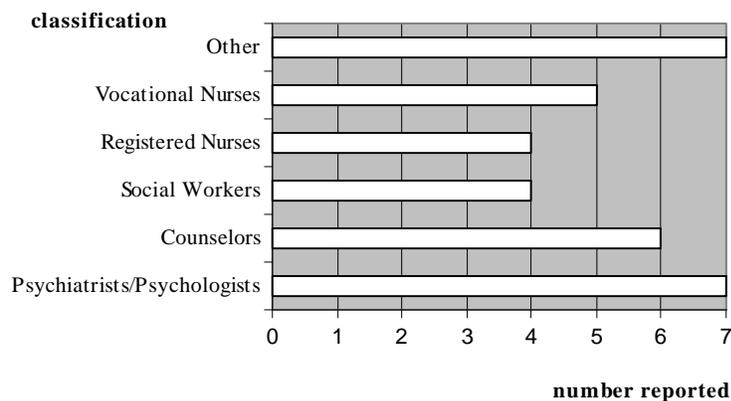
**Figure 26: Satisfaction With Health Care Systems Used in Jails**

137 responses, 33 marked "very satisfied", 56 "satisfied", 32 "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied", 13 "dissatisfied" and three "very dissatisfied". Although the overall rating was rather high, an unusually high number marked "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied". Closer analysis revealed that those administrators who relied on "rounds" by outside personnel and "on call" by transport to other agencies accounted for all of the "dissatisfied " and "very dissatisfied " marks along with 29 of the 32 "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" marks. In other words, when we reviewed only those administrators with full time medical staff assigned to the jail, we found that 42.5% were "very satisfied", 50% were "satisfied" and 7.5% "neither". On the other hand, those without full time medical staffs rated their systems as 18.3% "very satisfied", 36.6% "satisfied", 31.2% "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" and 14% as "dissatisfied".

***Mental Health Services***

Experts suggest that an alarming number of jail and prison inmates are in need of mental health services (Steadman, McCarty & Morrissey, 1989; American Psychiatric Association Report, 1989). A recent study conducted under the direction of the Bureau of Justice Statistics estimated that over 16% of jail inmates suffer from mental illness (Ditton, 1999). If an individual suffers from a mental disorder, he or she may also be charged and convicted of criminal acts and, therefore, spend months or even years in a local jail. The county sheriff through the local jail administrator is therefore obligated to provide some measure of professional service for that

**Mental Health Professionals Assigned to Jails: N=139**



**Figure 27: Number of Mental Health Professionals on Duty in Texas Jails**

portion of the jail population represented by this example. We devised a list of questions to ascertain how Texas jails addressed this issue. In question 46 we asked administrators if trained mental health professionals were assigned to the institution. **Figure 27** details the answers given.

Of all jails covered by the survey, only 15 (10.8%) had any mental health professionals assigned to the facility. Only seven of the fifteen had extensive staffs including psychiatrists or psychologists. The remaining eight had limited staffs including licensed vocational nurses and case workers. This information supports the data presented by Camp and Camp (2000,). Smaller jails throughout the nation tended to have greater instances of no mental health staff assigned to the facility. Since the present study includes many more smaller institutions than does the Camp and Camp study, one would expect to find fewer mental health professionals assigned.

Question 47 asked if mental health professionals helped screen incoming inmates or provided training for classification officers. Respondents replied that professionals screened those suspected of mental health deficiencies in only fourteen cases. This supports the position that mental health screening is substandard in small jails throughout the nation (Steadman & Versey, 1996). Further, mental health personnel provided training for classification officers in only five cases.

The next question, number 48, asked how mental health services were provided. Of 140 responses, 129 (92.1%) replied that the service was provided through the State Mental Health Mental Retardation Authority (MHMRA). Six respondents replied that the services were provided through a comprehensive medical services contract and two listed private sources. The remaining manager checked "other". Clearly, almost all mental health services are organized through MHMRA.

As with other issues, administrators were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with mental health services (Question 49). Of 138 responses, 15 (10.9%) were "outstanding". Surprisingly, 81 responses (58.7%) were marked "good", 31 (22.5%) "fair", eight (5.8%) "poor" and three (2.2%) "deplorable". The comments section suggested that some administrators were highly impressed by certain MHMRA employees. Even though approximately 70% of the administrators rated mental health services as either "outstanding" or "good", a substantial number rated them as "fair", "poor" or even "deplorable". Compared to other measures of satisfaction in this survey, managers rated mental health services rather low.

### ***Substance Abuse Programs***

For two decades jails and prisons have housed inordinate numbers of people with a history of substance abuse (Teplin, 1994). By the early 1990's incarceration for drug offenses threatened to overwhelm the corrections systems of America. It therefore became necessary to develop drug treatment throughout the justice system to include jails. We attempted to determine if local jails were involved in organized substance abuse programming. Question 50 asked:

**Does your jail system conduct organized substance abuse programs?**

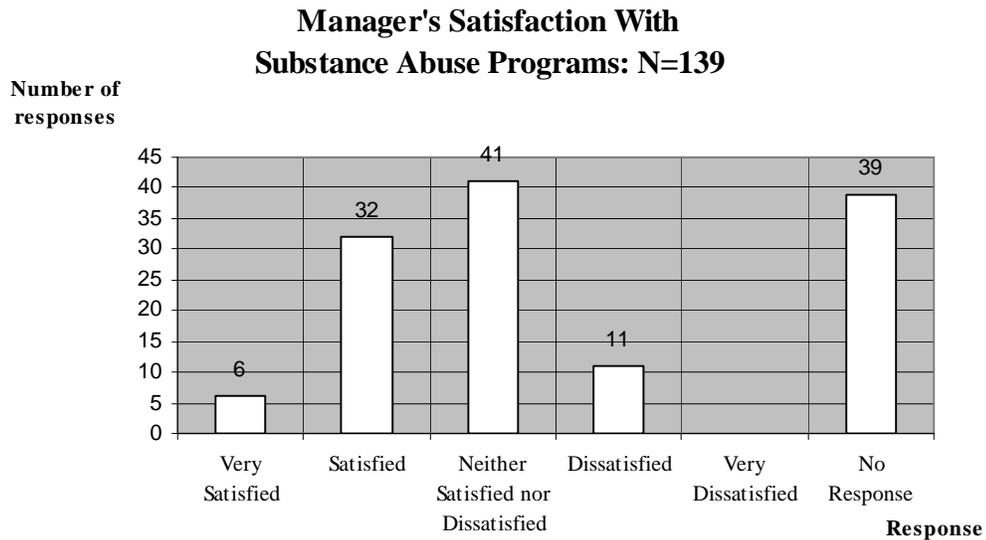
If "yes", the respondent was instructed to check one or more of the following choices.

- We conduct scheduled "AA" or "NA" meetings for inmates using volunteers and sponsors from the community.**
- We provide "therapeutic community" programs for inmates.**
- We participate in a "drug court" program.**
- Substance abuse programs are offered through probation**
- Other**

Results yielded the following information. Of the 140 respondents completing the survey, only 47 (33.6%) reported any type of substance abuse program. The reported figure is somewhat lower than the national average of 42% for local jails as calculated by Wilson (2000) who included detoxification as one type of treatment program. This indicates that two-thirds of Texas jails have no organized substance abuse programs even though research indicates that some programs are extremely effective (Tunis, Austin, Morris, Hardyman & Bolyard,1996). Even more alarming was the fact that the more intensive programs such as "therapeutic community" and "drug court" were employed by only two and three jurisdictions respectively. Twenty-three respondents listed "probation" as the agency designated to provide substance abuse programs.

The most common substance abuse programs in Texas jails appear to be Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. Forty-seven respondents (34%) listed "AA " and "NA" as a reply to question 50. This figure falls above Wilson's (2000) national average of only 22%. Historical research holds that the "AA" or "twelve step" approaches to addiction can be very effective. However, the program would be more effective if used in conjunction with other more comprehensive strategies, Unfortunately one cannot determine the full impact of these programs because they may be offered on a limited basis (once or twice per week) to any number of participants. Since "AA" and "NA" rely on volunteers, they are subject to be disbanded at any time. Substance abuse programming seems to be an area that could be vastly improved.

*Figure 28* summarizes respondent's level of satisfaction with substance abuse programs.



**Figure 28: Level of Satisfaction with Substance Abuse Programs**

Note the large number (39) of respondents who did not respond to the question. Of those that did assess the issue, over one half (57.7%) were either neutral (neither) or negative (dissatisfied). Less than one third (30.2%) of the total group expressed satisfaction in this area. This indicated a lack of substance abuse programming in the local jails of Texas.

***Inmate Classification***

The classification process is crucial to all local jail operations. By carefully considering all relevant factors, the classification officer determines where an incoming inmate will be housed, for which programs the inmate might be eligible and generally how the inmate will adapt to a jail setting. It is absolutely essential that certain inmates be housed in a manner that maximizes institutional safety for the prisoner in question as well as for other inmates and the staff (Allen & Simonsen, 1995). Some classification decisions are obvious. For example, males should never be housed with females. Those convicted of violent offenses should not be housed with non-violent first offenders. Other decisions may require more sophisticated analysis. Key questions regarding inmate compatibility must be addressed. Should homosexual inmates be housed together or should they be mainstreamed into the general population? Should older inmates be housed together or should they be grouped with others regardless of age? Such decisions determine the effectiveness of each jail's classification process.

Classification must be accurate, comprehensive, consistent, flexible and efficient (Solomon, 1980). The TCJS requires that all jails in the state maintain an *objective classification* system (TCJS, 2000). Structuring a system based on objective, factual information as the basis of classification decisions can satisfy this requirement. It is important that classification supervisors maintain a dynamic process in accordance with written policy. Two approaches to classification are considered acceptable. The *point additive* system assigns numeric values for identified characteristics. For example, an offender with a criminal history involving certain crimes is assigned a stated value. If the offender has ever attempted escape, an additional value is added. Other values may be added if the subject has a history of drug abuse, institutional disciplinary history or other factors. Conversely, points may be deducted under other circumstances. If the offender has maintained a regular job a value may be deducted. Once a final value is calculated, the individual is assigned housing based on his or her cumulative score. Certain cell blocks are designated to accommodate certain types of inmates (Brennan & Wells, 1991).

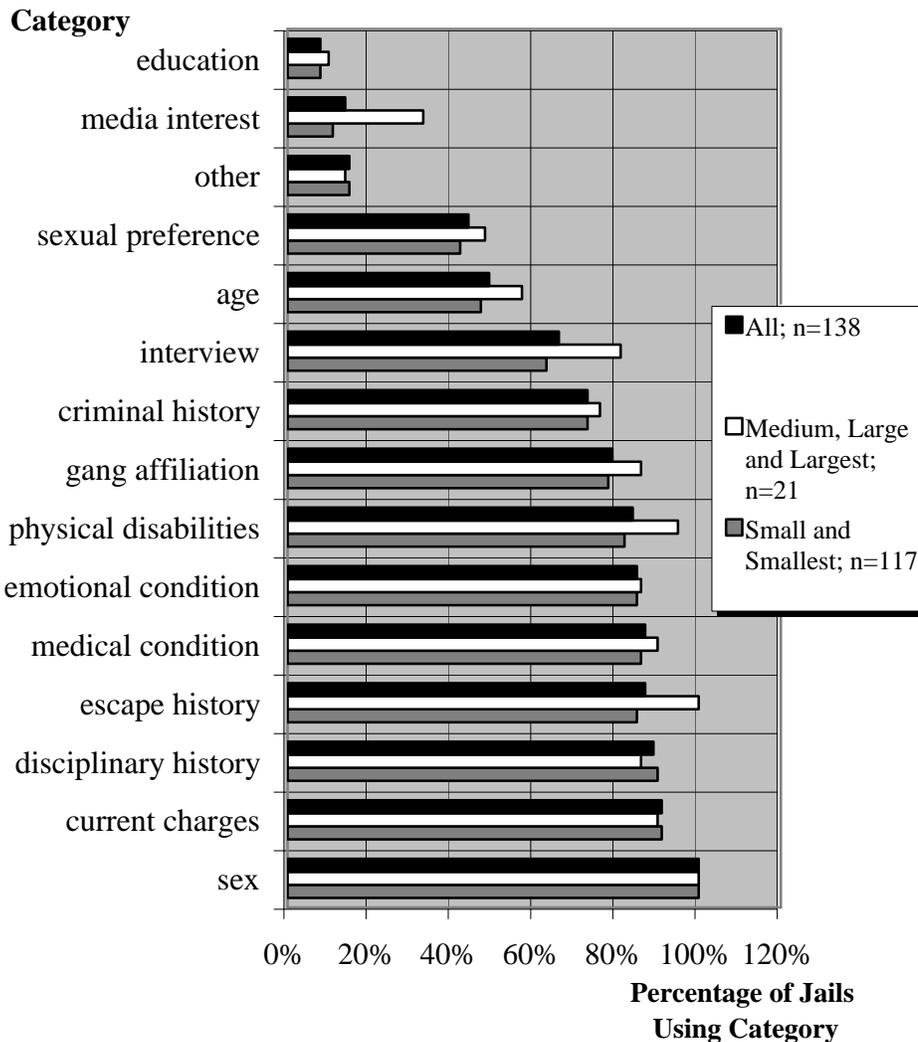
A second type of classification approach is known as the *decision tree*. Under this system information on each inmate is fed into a computerized system that places each incoming inmate in a housing unit based on facts sorted by the computer. For example, the facility may be designed so that 17 to 23 year old misdemeanant males with no serious medical problems are housed in a designated cell block. The decision tree will automatically place incoming inmates with those characteristics in appropriate categories for housing (Brennan and Wells, 1991).

Question 52 asked managers which type of classification approach was used in each facility. Possible answers included "a point additive system", "a decision tree" and "other". Of the 140 respondents, 99 (70.7%) reported "point additive", 39 (27.9%) marked "decision tree" and two marked "other". The majority chose "point additive" but a substantial minority used the "decision tree".

In question 53 we attempted to determine what factors were commonly used to make classification decisions. The results of this inquiry are shown in **Figure 29**. Responses are listed for the total number of jails (138) as well as by size of jail. Two size categories were calculated to reflect responses from smaller institutions including both the *small* and *smallest* jails and from larger jails including the *medium*, *large* and *largest* jails.

The five most widely used factors included sex, current charges, disciplinary history, escape history and medical condition. More than 87% of all the respondents reported using these factors. A second group of factors included emotional instability, physical disabilities, gang

## Factors Influencing Classification



**Figure 29: Factors Used to Classify Inmates**

membership, criminal history and an in-depth interview with the subject. From 66% to 85% of all administrators reported using these factors. Another group of factors was used less widely. From 8% to 64% of those polled reported using age, sexual preference, "other", media interest and education.

Several categories seemed slightly more popular in larger institutions. Of the 117 smaller sized jails, 85% (99) of the respondents reported using "escape history" whereas all 21 of the larger jail administrators reported using the same category. Twenty of twenty-one (95%) of the larger jail administrators but only 82 % (96) of the smaller jail representatives checked the category "physical disabilities". Larger jail representatives noted "interview" in 81% of the cases while the smaller group noted it in 63% of cases. Almost one half (10) of the 21 larger institutions reported using "sexual preference" as a classification factor while only 36% (42 of 117) of the smaller jails used the same factor. Larger jail respondents marked "media interest" as

a classification factor in seven of the 21 (33%) cases while only 13 of the 117 (11%) in the smaller jail group marked this factor. Researchers were impressed with the sophistication of jail classification systems.

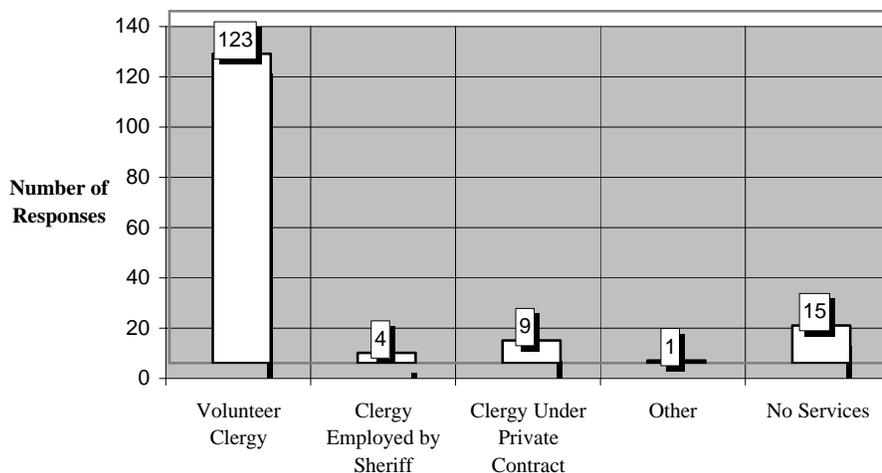
In question 54 we asked managers to estimate the percentage of inmates in their custody requiring minimum, medium and maximum housing. Responses ranged from 5% to 99% in the "minimum" category with a mean of 43%. In the "medium" category estimates ranged from a low of 2% to a high of 100% with a mean of 34%. In the "maximum" category responses ranged from a low of 1% to a high of 100% with a mean of 22%. Given the wide variance pattern of responses, it is difficult to draw any definitive conclusion other than to state that "minimum security" should apply to a larger group of inmates than "maximum security".

We also asked managers if they were satisfied with their ability to properly classify inmates. Of 137 responses, 45 (32.8%) reported "very satisfied", 70 (51.1%) reported "satisfied", 13 or 9.5% reported "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied", seven (5.1%) reported "dissatisfied" and two (1.5%) reported "very dissatisfied". This information indicated an overall satisfaction with the classification process. Some 84% reported some level of satisfaction as opposed to only six percent who reported some degree of dissatisfaction.

### ***Religious Service***

Preachers, priests, rabbi's and religious advisors have a long-standing reputation for ministering to prisoners. Texas jails utilize this resource to provide religious service and personal counseling to inmates. In addition, many are permitted to coordinate activities with family members, deliver death and illness messages and structure religious activities for the inmate population (Graziano, 1999). The TCJS requires a religious plan for each county jail (TCJS, 2000).

**Administration of Religious Services: N=139**



**Figure 30: Administrative Organization for Religious Programs**

We sought to discover how religious services were administered in county jails. Managers were asked if organized services were conducted at each facility (Question 56). As a follow-up, we asked those that responded "yes" how such programs were structured (Questions 56a through 56d). Choices included "volunteer clergy", "clergy employed by the sheriff's department", "clergy employed by churches or private contract", and "other". For the purpose of the survey, we considered a "volunteer" to be any authorized religious professional or lay person who did not work under contract with the jail, the sheriff's department or the county.

*Figure 30* illustrates the breakdown of religious services programming in Texas jails by type of administrative arrangement. A total of 139 administrators responded and 124 stated that organized services were conducted. Note that some of the respondents listed more than one entry. Several of the larger systems employed multiple approaches to religious service programming. An overwhelming majority of local jails used "volunteer clergy" for religious services. Of 139 responses 123 (88.5%) marked the survey as "volunteer clergy". Nine administrators replied that they contracted the service through private firms or church organizations. Four managers replied that the sheriff's department employed clergy. At least one noted in the "comments" section that a corrections officer staff member was an ordained minister and performed the function. One respondent checked the "other" category.

The jail administrators' opinions regarding the importance of religious programming were addressed in Question 58. Respondents were asked to mark the relative importance of existing efforts as "high importance", "some importance", "little importance" or "no importance". Of 132 responses to this question, 70 (53%) marked "high importance", 61 or 46.2% marked "some importance" and one marked "little importance". No respondents marked "no importance". It appeared from this information that jail administrators recognized the contribution of religious programs to the overall jail management effort.

### ***Inmate Education***

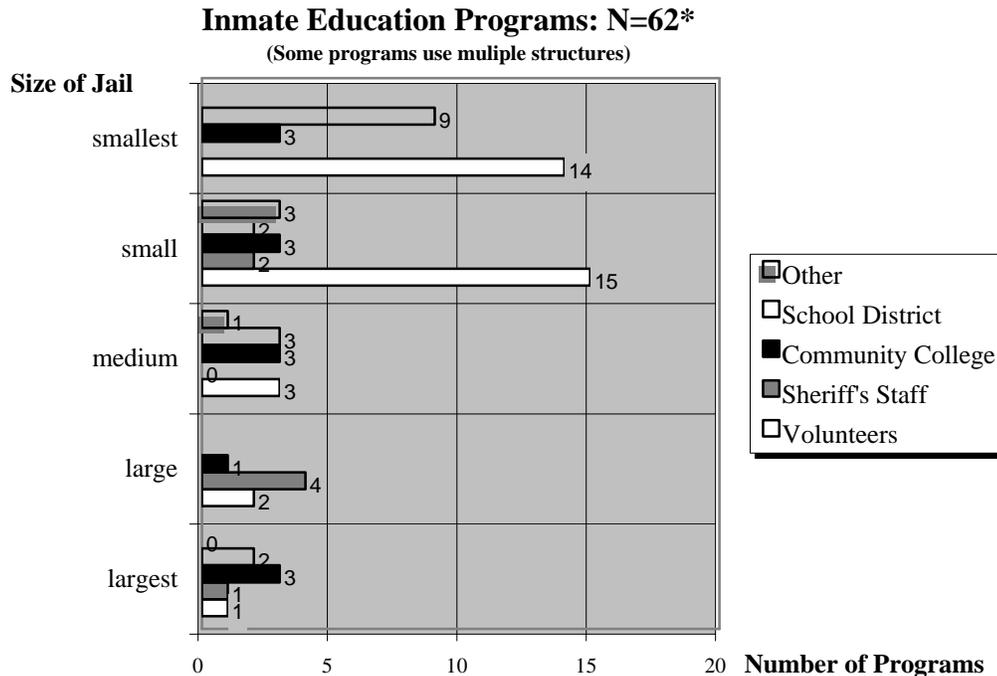
Organized correctional education is best suited for prison settings because, compared to local jails, the student population is more stable and homogeneous (Kellar, 1999). In addition, prisons are able to schedule classes around fixed curriculum and time frames. Still, county jails collectively house tens of thousands of men and women who lack basic academic skills, basic literacy, coping capacities and vocational requisites (Leone, 2001). It therefore behooves the local jail administrator to provide whatever organized educational programming that is practical.

Inmate education in the county jail may range from an evening literacy class conducted by a volunteer instructor to an elaborate vocational training block equipped with "state of the art" resources and a highly skilled faculty. Programs may rely solely on part time dedicated teachers or they may include administrators, counselors and other specialists. Often, larger jails form partnerships with school districts, community colleges or other educational institutions to deliver highly specialized course offerings to jail inmates.

In our efforts to provide descriptive information concerning inmate education in Texas county jails, we devised a series of questions in the survey. Number 59 asked, "Do you have an organized inmate education program at your jail?"

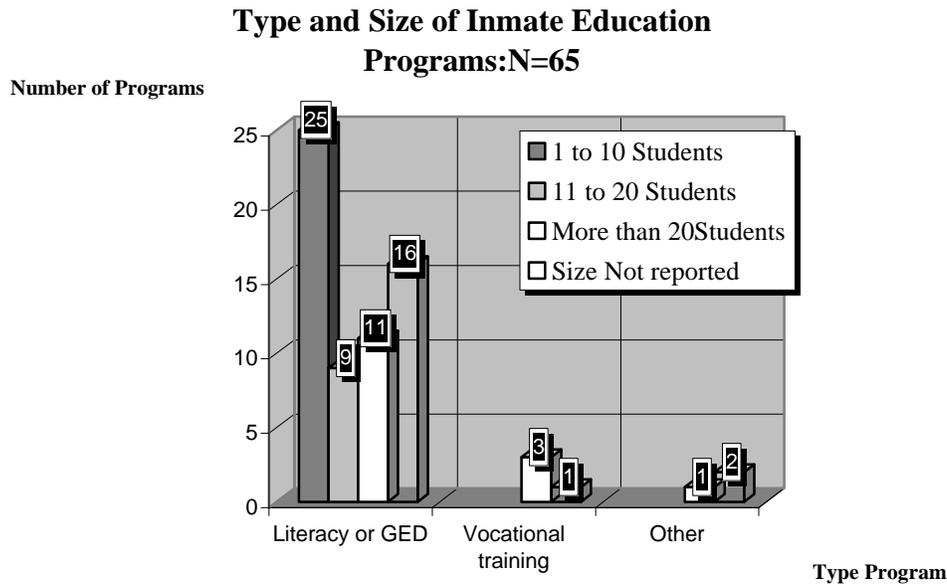
If the subject answered "yes", he or she was directed to complete the next section of the survey. If the answer given was "no", the subject was directed to the final question relating to inmate

education. The remainder of question 59, 59a through 59e, was structured to identify the administrative method used in the education program. Choices included "volunteer teachers/counselors", "teachers/counselors/administrators employed by the sheriff's department", "arrangement with a local community college", "arrangement with a local school district" and "other".



**Figure 31: Inmate Education Programs by Size of Jail**

**Figure 31** illustrates the responses entered on question 59. Only 62 of 140 jail managers (44.3%) reported any type of organized inmate education effort. The remaining 78 respondents (55.2%) reported *no* inmate education at all. The most widely used structure was "volunteer teachers and counselors". A total of 35 administrators reported volunteer educational programs. Most of these were distributed among *small* (15) and *smallest* (14) but the larger institutions reported some volunteer-based programs. Sixteen managers reported education programs coordinated with local school districts. Nine of these were in the *smallest* jails, two in *small* jails, three in *medium* jails, and two in the *largest* jails. Twelve systems coordinated efforts with local community colleges. These programs were spread evenly among *smallest* jails with three programs, *small* jails with three, *medium* jails with three, *large* jails with one and *largest* jails with two. Seven departments supplemented the education program by employing personnel through the sheriff's staff. In some cases these personnel supplemented other administrative strategies. Four respondents entered the choice "other". Two of the "other" entries included life skills training programs.



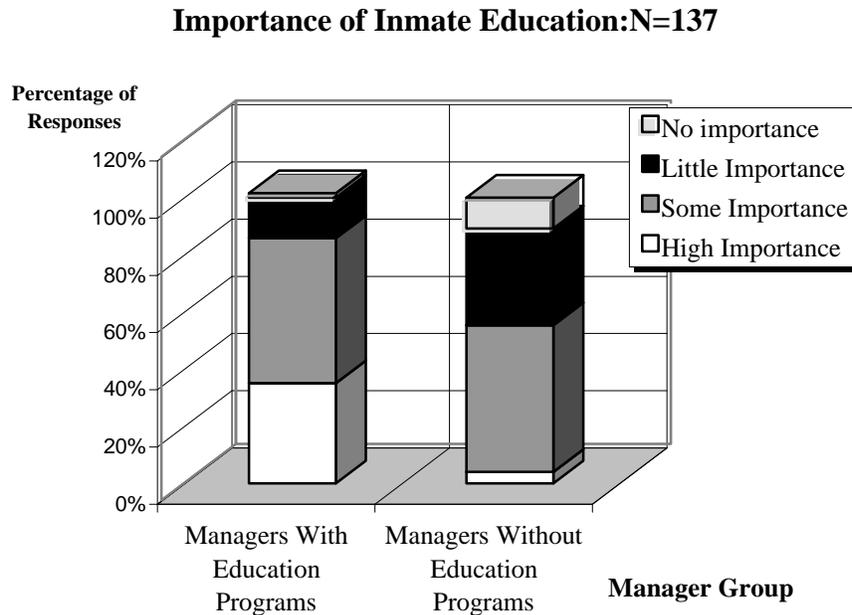
**Figure 32: Types and Sizes of Inmate Education Programs**

Next we attempted to determine the nature and extent of inmate education programs by asking managers to categorize programs by type and number of inmate students enrolled. **Figure 32** graphs the results of that poll. The most common type of program was basic literacy or general educational development (GED) preparation. Adult literacy stresses basic skills for those who function at a basic level. More advanced students prepare for a high school equivalency test of general educational development (GED). Sixty-one units reported some type of literacy or GED program. About four in ten (40.1%) of these programs served small inmates classes of one to nine students. Nine literacy programs had student enrollments of from ten to 19 inmates and eleven programs served student populations of more than twenty. Sixteen respondents did not complete the section requesting number of students enrolled.

Four respondents reported vocational training programs. All respondents to this question were in the *large* and *largest* categories. All four programs reported student enrollments of more than 35 inmates. Vocational education seemed to require a large inmate population for support. Of the three respondents who reported "other" program types, one noted that the program was provided through the local probation department. A second reported a "self-paced instructional approach" and the third reported a comprehensive skills program.

Question 61 concerned each administrator's opinion regarding the relative importance of inmate education in a county jail. All administrators, including those who did not sponsor organized education programs were encouraged to respond. The overall results showed mixed opinions concerning inmate education. Twenty-five (18.2%) of the managers saw education as "high importance". Seventy or 51.1% rated it as "some importance, 33 (24.1%) as "little

importance" and nine or 6.5% as "no importance". These figures suggested less than enthusiastic support for inmate education.



**Figure 33: The Importance of Inmate Education From Managers With and Without Existing Programs**

Manager opinions concerning inmate education varied dramatically depending on which group of administrators was polled. *Figure 33* contrasts the responses given by those reporting inmate programs and those reporting no inmate programs. Of those with programs, 35% rated inmate education as "high importance" whereas only 4% of the group without programs rated it as "high importance". Conversely, 14.2% of the program group rated education as "little importance" and 1.5% rated it as "no importance". Of the group without programs, over one third (33.8%) rated inmate education as "little importance" and an additional 10.8% rated it as "no importance". We concluded that administrators with existing inmate education programs were more likely to express the importance of such programs than were those who did not administer inmate education programs.

***Library Service***

Texas county jails may provide either or both of two types of libraries for inmates; a regular reading library and a legal reference library or *writ room*. First, we asked our respondents whether their jails furnished reading materials to inmates. If they answered "yes", we followed up by asking the type of administrative arrangement used to provide this service. Choices

included "through donations and volunteers", "through chaplains staff", through "sheriff's staff" and "other". A few respondents answered with more than one choice. Because some systems would accept donations and also assign personnel from the sheriff's staff to library duty, it was possible that multiple answers could be valid.

Of 164 responses received, 90 (54.8%) reported using donations and volunteers. The second most popular answer was "sheriff's staff. Of the total, 58 (35.4%) reported this response. Ten systems (6.1%) reported library service coordinated through the chaplain's office. Six respondents reported "other".

Another inquiry asked if a legal reference library or writ room was available for inmates. Of 139 responses 91 indicated that a writ room was available while 48 indicated that no writ room was available. The authors caution that interpretation of this entry may suggest some confusion. Several respondents checked either "yes" or "no" to the question and proceeded to explain that inmates were given access to a county library or attorney's reference library. It was not clear how all of the administrators interpreted the question.

### ***Building Maintenance***

All public facilities require some degree of periodic upkeep and maintenance. Jails present a particularly challenging maintenance example because they receive constant use. Most non-detention structures lie dormant for extended periods of time throughout the week and year. The typical office building is closed after working hours and on weekends. Schools are used during the daytime and while classes are in session. Factories may shut down for major maintenance overhauls. But jails are open continuously without slow down. Work schedules dictate that booking operations peak during weekends; court dockets are readied during the early morning hours and releasing becomes active nears mid-night. If periodic overcrowding exacerbates this schedule, the required maintenance becomes overwhelming.

To further compound an already critical situation, many disgruntled inmates (and sometimes staff) maliciously vandalize locks toilets and technical equipment. Decision-makers are often hesitant to properly fund required building maintenance for fear of public criticism.

The local administrator must develop a strategy for efficient, timely and effective building maintenance. This goal is especially challenging considering the sophisticated technical systems that are included in modern jails. In past times a type of "handyman" approach to building maintenance was adequate, but today's jails include high tech security, electronics, climate control and processing systems.

We asked three groups of questions in the area of building maintenance. Number 64 inquired:

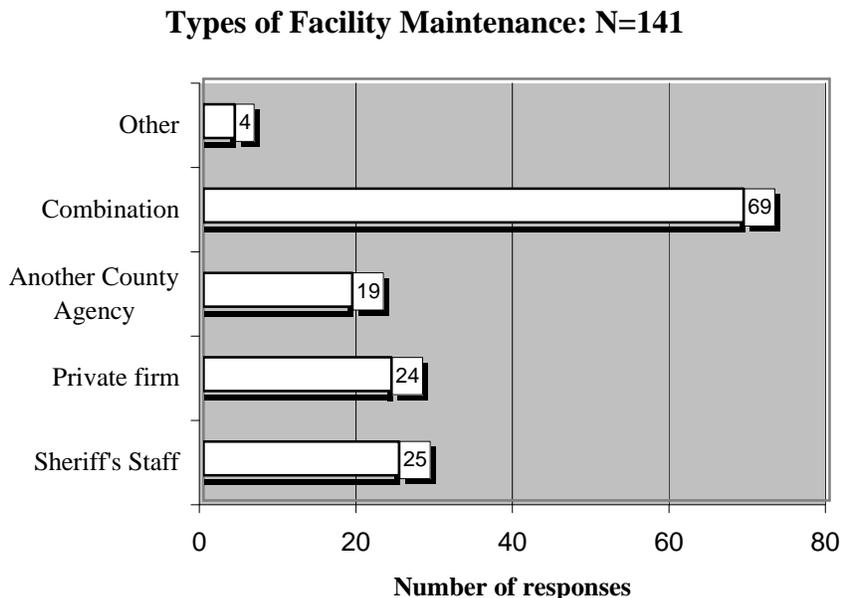
**How do you provide routine maintenance such as plumbing, electrical and HVAC repair for your facility? (This question does not address major renovations or systems replacements, nor does it address highly technical systems maintenance.)**

Respondents were given five possible choices.

**Sheriff's staff**  
**County employees from another county agency**  
**Private firm through contract**  
**Some combination of the above**

## Other

Answers were received from 141 administrators. These responses are summarized in *Figure 35*.



**Figure 35: Type Facility Maintenance Used in Jails**

Results indicated a fairly even spread among alternatives. Of all respondents, 25 (17.7%) indicated personnel in the sheriff's department performed maintenance. Almost as many, 24 of 141 (17%) responded that a private firm performed maintenance. Nineteen agencies (13.5%) reported maintenance performed by another county agency such as the building superintendent. The largest category, 69 of 141 (48.9%) reported maintenance performed by some combination of the above arrangements. Four managers reported "other".

Jail administrators rated the importance of building maintenance. Of 140 responses, 126 (90%) indicated building maintenance as "high importance". The remaining 14 (10%) ranked building maintenance as "some importance". Not a single administrator rated maintenance as "little importance" or "no importance". Clearly, Texas jail administrators view building maintenance as a crucial part of jail operations.

We attempted to determine the managers' level of satisfaction with existing maintenance structures and arrangements. Using our standard five choice satisfaction question, we asked respondents to choose from "very satisfied", "satisfied", "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied", "dissatisfied" and "very dissatisfied". Thirty subjects (22%) of the 136 total chose "satisfied" while 79 administrators (58.1%) reported "satisfied". Approximately 80% of all respondents rated existing maintenance with some level of satisfaction. Of the remaining managers, 16 (11.8%) rated their opinion of existing maintenance as "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" and ten (7.3%) rated it as "dissatisfied". One participant marked the choice "very dissatisfied". In

general, administrators seemed pleased with building maintenance but a few expressed some levels of dissatisfaction. No single delivery system seemed superior to all the others.

### *Laundry Service*

One of the more mundane jail operations addressed by the survey is inmate laundry. For obvious security reasons, inmates must wear some type of clothing that identifies them as separate from the general public. Traditionally, prisoners in Texas as well as in other southern states wear white cotton shirts with matching trousers. This uniform is known universally as "prison whites". The uniform is comfortable for working in hot or humid climates, serviceable, affordable and extremely durable.

Traditionally, many prisoners were dressed in black and white striped uniforms. This practice can be traced to the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century and the "Auburn" or "Western" prison system (Allen & Simonsen, 1995) It became popular throughout America after its induction but lost favor during the 1940's and 1950's because it was seen as demeaning and insulting to the inmates. By the 1980's and 1990's a more conservative philosophy toward corrections grew and attitudes about "stripes" underwent a resurgence in popularity. Many jurisdictions including local jails began to use striped uniforms for inmates.

Some administrators favor a one-piece loosely fitting "jump suit" type uniform over the two-piece pants and shirt outfit. This style is more manageable for laundry purposes because only one item is required for each subject. Since the jump suit fits very loosely, a few general sizes can be used to fit a variety of inmates. Further, a jump suit does not require a belt that may be used as a weapon or tool for assault or suicide.

Recently, many jurisdictions have adopted highly colored uniforms as an alternative to "prison whites" or stripes. In instances where inmates mingle with the general population such as court appearance, "prison whites" may be confused with the dress of civilian citizens such as painters, bakers or mechanics. Brightly colored orange or green uniforms present a unique image that cannot cause such confusion. Often the words "county jail" or "prisoner" will be boldly stamped on the uniform.

Some administrators attempt to use uniforms to identify inmates by classification category. Under this approach the system would authorize a number of different colored uniforms for issue to inmates. Those classed as "escape risks" might wear one color, those classed as workers another, those classed in general population another and so on. In this manner an inmate will be quickly identified as being in the wrong place. This system may become unmanageable if too many colors are used or if inmate classification changes continuously.

We attempted to determine what style and what colors of uniforms were most often used in Texas jails. Question number 67 asked:

**Do all same sex inmates wear the same color uniform? Please write in the color.**

**Yes, males wear one-piece "jump suit" type uniforms. (Color)**

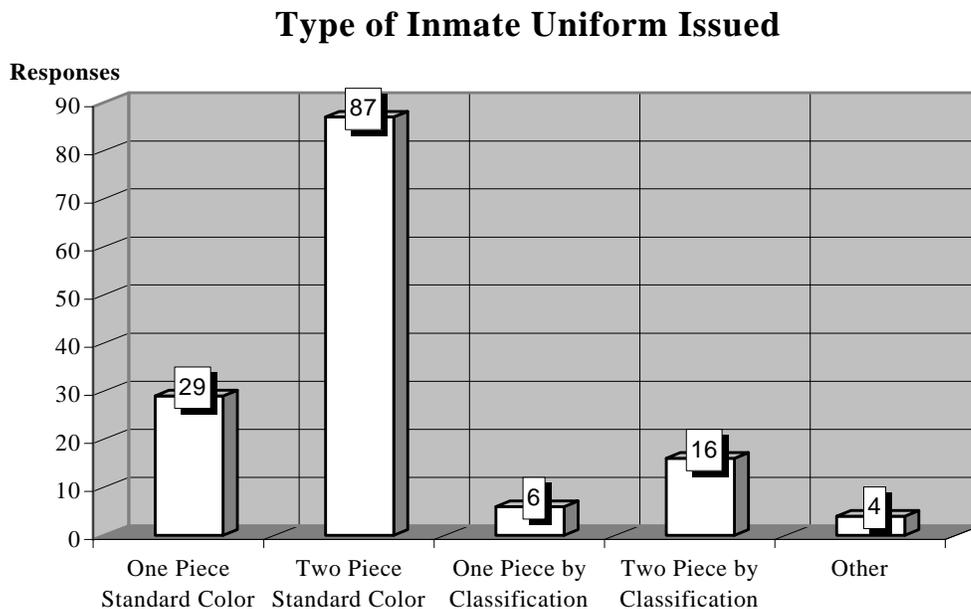
**Yes, males wear two-piece trouser and shirt. (Color)**

**No, males wear one-piece uniforms colored to reflect classification.**

**No, males wear two-piece uniforms colored to reflect classification.**

**Other, Please explain.**

A total of 141 jail administrators replied to this inquiry. Results of those responses appear in *Figure 35*. The most common answer given was "yes, males wear two-piece uniforms". Eighty-seven respondents chose this answer. This figure represented 61.7% of all responses. More than six in ten systems used single color two-piece uniforms. Another 29 administrators (20.6%) of the total chose the answer "Yes, males wear one-piece "jump suit type uniforms". Although fewer managers marked this option, a substantial number favored the "jump suit". Only 16 respondents representing 11.3% of the total marked their reply as "No, males wear two-piece



**Figure 35: Type of Inmate Uniforms Used in Jails**

uniforms colored to reflect classification". Six (4.2%) responded that they used "jump suits" colored to reflect classification and four (2.8%) chose "other". The "other " category reflected a single color uniform for all but a select few workers who were issued a different color uniform.

As a curiosity we attempted to discover what colors were most popular in Texas jails. *Table 8* presents these findings. Orange was the most frequently used color with 59 institutions using it. Next was black and white stripes with 28 jails. Only nine of the 141 respondents used white uniforms. Small numbers of institutions used various other colors.

**Table 8: Color of Inmate Uniforms in Texas Jails: N=141**

<b>Color Uniform</b>	<b>Number of Jails Using Color</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
<b>Orange</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>41.8%</b>
<b>Black and White Stripe</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>19.9%</b>
<b>"Prison White"</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6.4%</b>
<b>Orange and White Stripe</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2.8%</b>
<b>Blue</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
<b>Tan</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1.4%</b>
<b>Orange and Blue Stripe</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>.7%</b>
<b>Green</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>.7%</b>
<b>Not Given</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5.7%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2.8%</b>
<b>Colors by Classification</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>15.6%</b>

We asked administrators how often inmates were given a change of clothing. Of 140 respondents to this question, 57 (40.7%) said "every three days". Next in frequency was every two days with 41 respondents (29.3%). Twenty-one jails or 15% gave inmates a change every week and 14 (10%) replaced clothing daily. The remaining 7 (5%) gave inmates a change of clothing every four days.

Next we attempted to determine if inmates were permitted to purchase underwear from the commissary or if they were required to receive underwear from the laundry system. Responses were fairly evenly divided on this issue. Of 140 responses, 79 (56.4%) answered that inmates could purchase underwear from the commissary. The other 61 (43.6%) did not allow inmates to purchase underwear.

In order to ascertain how each laundry system was organized we asked question number 70 as: "How is laundry organized?"

- Staffed by sheriff's employees with inmate workers.**
- Provided by contract with a private firm with inmate workers**
- Provided by contract with a private firm without inmate workers**
- Other**

Of the 140 respondents who answered the question, 129 (over 92%) replied that the sheriff's staff operated the laundry with inmate workers. Nine managers reported operation by private firms. Two reported "other". In Texas almost all jail laundry operations are performed internally by the sheriff's staff. Although a few jurisdictions have used private firms to provide jail laundry service, most continue to use a system of inmate workers supervised by corrections officers or other members of the sheriff's staff.

Administrators were requested to assign a level of importance to laundry service and to rate their level of satisfaction with their existing service. Of 139 responses to the question concerning importance, 83 respondents (59.7%) of the group noted laundry as an area of "high importance" while 52 (37.4%) noted laundry as an area of "some importance". Only four respondents (2.9%) noted "little importance" and none rated it as "no importance". This indicated that administrators felt laundry was an important operation but not as crucial as some others.

Generally, administrators reported a high degree of satisfaction with existing laundry service. Of 139 responses, 40 (28.8%) reported "very satisfied". Another 88 (63.3%) reported "satisfied". By combining these two responses we concluded that more than 92% of the reporting

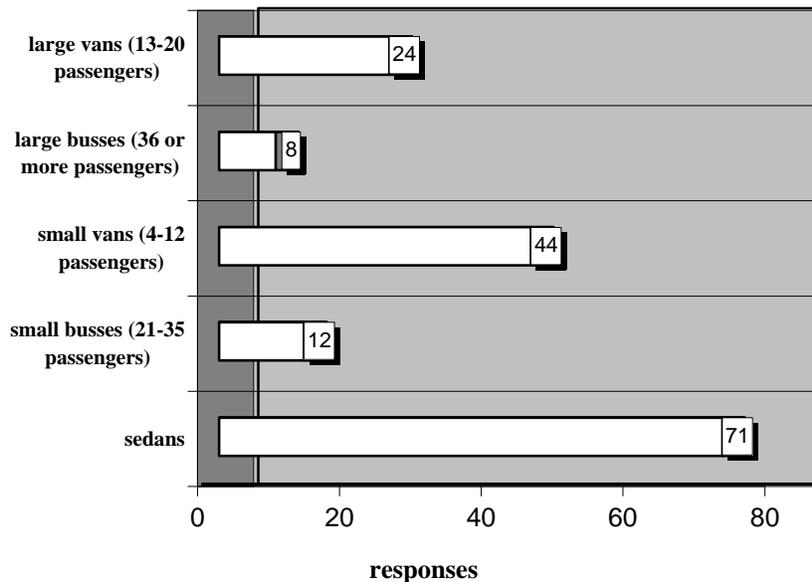
group expressed some degree of satisfaction. Only three administrators (2.2%) responded that they were "dissatisfied" with laundry service. A single manager responded by reporting "very dissatisfied". This led us to the conclusion that fewer than three percent of the respondents expressed any degree of dissatisfaction with existing laundry systems. Of the nine managers who did employ private firms to operate the jail's laundry system, six reported "satisfied" while the remaining three reported "very satisfied". No managers using private contracts reported any degree of dissatisfaction.

### ***Inmate Transportation***

Some jail functions are well beyond the scope of the system's ability to respond at the facility site. It is therefore often necessary to transport a subject inmate to an off-site location. Frequently, functions such as court appearance, medical treatment, psychological assessment or transport to another housing facility require transporting inmates on a regular basis. Even the smallest of jails is required to conduct these functions from time to time. If the jail administrator is responsible for transport, some arrangements must be made to establish a systematic approach to transportation management.

Two basic organizational approaches are available for prisoner transportation. Some departments maintain a departmental transportation fleet while others contract with private firms to provide transportation services. The number of inmates to be transported, the frequency of trips and the distance traveled will determine the scope of transportation and the equipment required in accomplishing the task. We attempted to determine the vehicular requirements for each jail system by asking administrators if they maintained a fleet of transport vehicles. If they answered "yes", they were instructed to check the types of vehicles used for inmate transport. ***Figure 36*** summarizes their responses.

### Vehicles Used for Inmate Transport

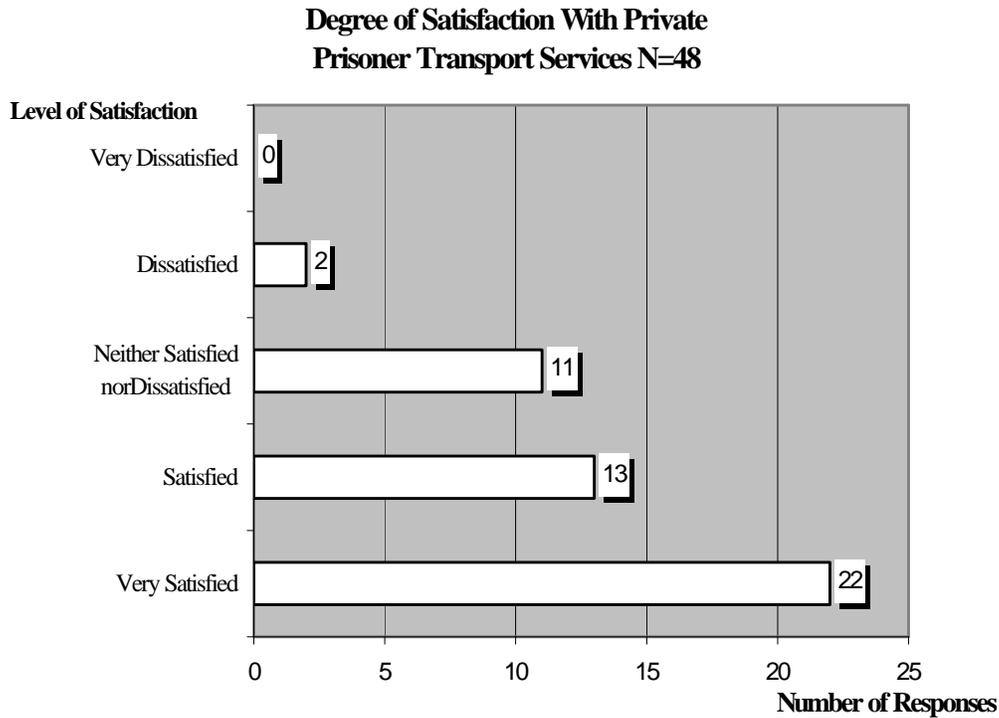


**Figure 36: Types of Vehicles Used For Inmate Transportation**

Of the 140 respondents 71 or approximately one half reported maintaining a fleet of vehicles. Sedans were the most common type of vehicle. All 71 administrators reported sedans as part of their inventory. Forty-four (31.4%) reported small vans with passenger capacity of from four to twelve. Twenty-four (17.1%) used large vans with passenger capacities of 13 to 20 and twelve (8.6%) used small busses with passenger capacities of 21 to 35. Eight of the largest jail systems (5.7%) maintained large busses with passenger capacities of 36 or more.

Personnel assigned to the sheriff's department, a separate county vehicle maintenance agency or a private firm could perform vehicle maintenance. We asked administrators to specify which of these arrangements applied to their jurisdiction. Over half of the respondents replied that private firms performed maintenance. This response may be clarified when one closely examines the breakdown by size of institution. A full 95% of those reporting a "private firm" or 61 of 64 responses consisted of jails in the *small* and *smallest* categories. For the most part these jurisdictions had contracts or other arrangements with auto dealers or mechanics in the area to maintain vehicles. The remainder of the responses were split fairly evenly between maintenance performed by the sheriff's department (25 responses) and maintenance performed by another county agency (22 responses). Three respondents reported "other".

A number of private firms offer complete transport service for prisoners. These businesses have been subjected to intense criticism over the past several years because of incidents that have occurred concerning their service (Ward, 1999; Friedman, 1997). We wanted to determine if representatives from those jurisdictions who entered into private contracts for prisoner transport were satisfied with the service rendered. Question 75 was phrased:



**Figure 37: Satisfaction Levels With Private Inmate Transportation**

**Do you contract with any private firm to transport inmates?**

**How satisfied are you with the private contractor?**

**very satisfied**

**satisfied**

**neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**

**dissatisfied**

**very dissatisfied**

Results of this inquiry are reported in *Figure 37*. Approximately one third of the jails represented or 48 of 141 reported that they did contract with private firms for the transport of inmates. Of the 48, 72% (35) reported some level of satisfaction, 22 "very satisfied" and 13 "satisfied". Only 4% or two respondents reported levels of dissatisfaction. Both reported "dissatisfied" and none reported "very dissatisfied". The other eleven or 24% reported "neither". This indicated to us that administrators were reasonably pleased with private prisoner transportation.

Administrators were asked to rank their opinions of the importance of inmate transportation as it related to overall operations. Of 136 representatives, 94 (69.3%) rated inmate transportation as "high importance" and 41 (30%) rated it as "some importance". One manager rated it as "no

importance". While this category was not seen as important as some others, it did show a degree of relative importance.

### ***Information Management***

The criminal justice system relies on volumes of documents, forms, reports and logs. In today's justice world it is imperative that systems utilize the most effective methods of data entry, filing, distribution and retrieval (Nelson, 1995; Schmitz, 2001). While a comprehensive review of information systems is well beyond the scope of this project, we did attempt to determine how many Texas jail systems used computerized information systems and how administrators viewed their effectiveness. Once again, we caution that the sophistication of a system should not be seen as an evaluation of system merit. In the case of smaller jails, computerized systems may present a case of diminishing returns. Whereas larger systems may require computer assistance and efficiency based on operational volume, smaller systems may not.

Question number 77 asked administrators if they had a computer-based inmate information management system. If they replied that they did, we asked if the system was used to accomplish any or all of the following tasks.

Tracking inmates within the system

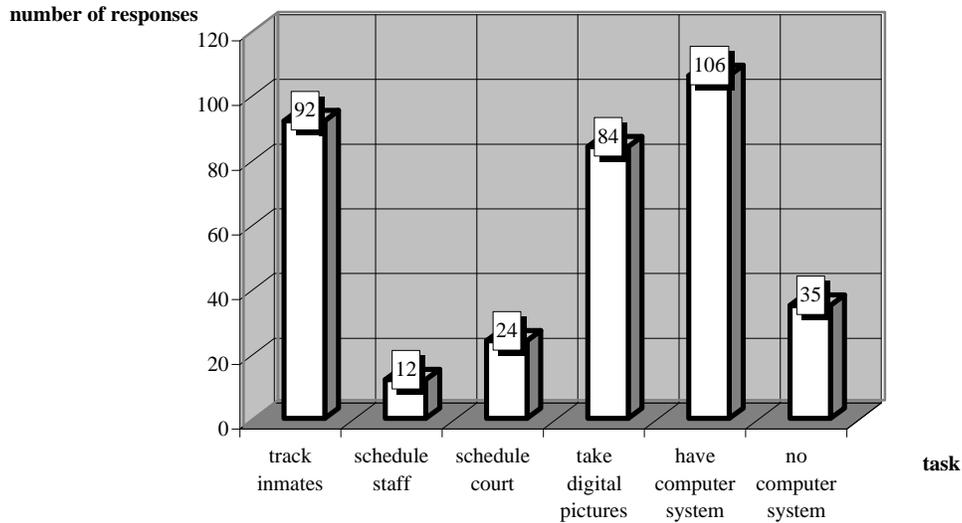
Scheduling staff

Scheduling court appearances for inmates

Digitally recording inmate photographs

Responses to this inquiry appear in **Figure 38**. Approximately three of four jail system administrators replied that they had a computerized management system. Only 35 managers reported no computer systems. Of the 106 who have computerized operations, 92 (86.8) were used to track inmates within the system and to provide photo identification of inmates. A much smaller percentage used the computer system to schedule staff and to schedule inmates for court appearance. Only twelve (11.3%) used computers to schedule staff and only 24 (22.6%) used computers to schedule inmates for court appearance. These figures should not be used to conclude that the systems could not perform these functions. It is entirely possible that, because of small volume, some administrators could not justify the resources used for these purposes. If the jail sends a limited number of inmates to a relatively

## Jail Information Systems



**Figure 38: Computerized Inmate Information Systems**

few courts on a regular basis, a computerized docket scheduling function is not needed. If, however, hundreds of inmates are sent to dozens of courts every working day (as is the case in larger facilities) such a system might be crucial.

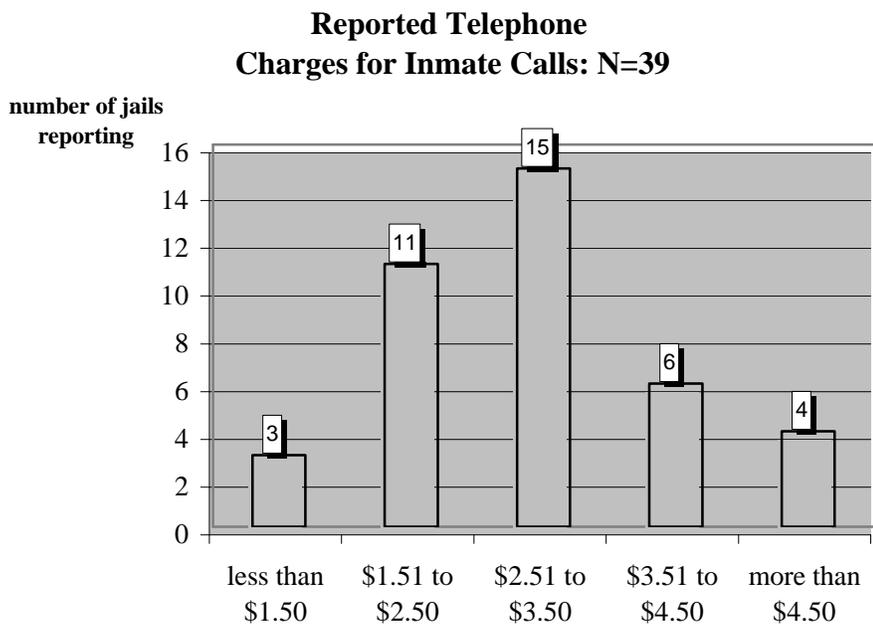
Managers were asked to assess their existing computer operations by ranking their level of satisfaction with the system. Only 106 marked this entry and 55 (51.8%) checked "satisfied". An additional 13 respondents (12.2%) checked "very satisfied". Approximately six of ten expressed some level of satisfaction. On the other hand, 17 (16%) marked "dissatisfied" while 6 (5.7%) marked "very dissatisfied". One of every five respondents expressed some level of dissatisfaction. The remaining 15 managers (14.2%) checked "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied". These data suggest an alarming number of administrators who are not satisfied with their present computer systems.

We also asked managers to assign an importance level to computer information systems in their operations. A total of 137 administrators responded to this question. Seventy-nine (more than 70%) marked "high importance" and 30 (21.9%) marked "some importance". Seven respondents (5%) marked "little importance" and three respondents representing 2.2% of the total marked "no importance". It was noteworthy that all of those who marked "little importance" or "no importance" came from the group who reported no computers used in jail operations. Even though administrators expressed some levels of dissatisfaction with their existing computer systems, they rated their importance relatively high. Those who used computer systems rated their importance greater than those who did not use computer systems.

### *Inmate Telephone Service*

Contrary to many popular beliefs as expounded by movies and television programs, most jail inmates are given ample opportunity to place personnel telephone calls while incarcerated. While it is true that law often mandates the proverbial "one phone call", in Texas the TCJS mandates a policy of two calls (TCJS, 2000). Most jail managers allow inmates to make as many calls as needed to secure bond, contact an attorney or arrange for personal business. Some companies have seized on this opportunity to make a profit by providing a system wherein inmates place "collect" calls and the proceeds are shared between the private firm and the county of sheriff's department.

We asked representatives if they allowed inmates to make collect calls (question 80). If the respondent answered "yes", we asked how much the answering party was charged. **Figure 39**



**Figure 39: Charges for Inmate Telephone Calls**

illustrates telephone charges. Of 139 jails represented, 126 (90.6%) reported that inmates are allowed to make collect telephone calls. Only 39 administrators could supply the dollar amount charged the inmate. Part of this lack of information resulted from several systems using a "per minute" rate as opposed to a flat rate. Of those who did report, the average charge was \$3.00. Charges ranged from a low of \$1.00 to a high of \$6.00.

Next, we asked those who did allow collect calls how the profits were distributed. Respondents were asked to choose from the options:

- They are credited to the sheriff's budget and not the county "general fund".**
- They are credited to the county budget and not the sheriff's budget.**
- They are credited to both the county and the sheriff's budget**
- Other**

Of the 121 administrators who responded to this question, the majority or 76 (62.8%) answered that profits were credited to the county budget. Thirty-two cases (26.4%) went directly to the sheriff's budget. Some respondents noted in the comments section that telephone profits were earmarked for commissary or other inmate welfare use. Eight respondents reported profits shared by both the sheriff and the county and four reported other. One manager reported that no profits were realized from telephone service.

Administrators were asked to assign a level of importance to inmate telephone service. Of the 138 representatives who answered this question, slightly more than one half or 70 rated inmate telephone service as "high importance". Another 63 (45.6%) rated it as "some importance". Only three respondents (2.2%) rated inmate telephone systems as "little importance" and two managers rated it as "no importance". Respondents gave inmate telephone service a relatively high overall importance ranking.

Managers were asked in question 83 to rate their satisfaction with current inmate telephone services. A total of 138 answered this question. Of the total, 48 (35%) listed the response "very satisfied". Another 62 (45.3%) responded "satisfied". More than 80% expressed some level of satisfaction. Twenty respondents (14.6%) listed "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied". A small group of six representing 4.4% of the total rated the service as "dissatisfied" and two (1.5%) marked "very dissatisfied". In other words, only 6% of the total group expressed any level of dissatisfaction. This led us to conclude that inmate telephone systems represented areas of general satisfaction by jail managers.

### *Inmate Visitation*

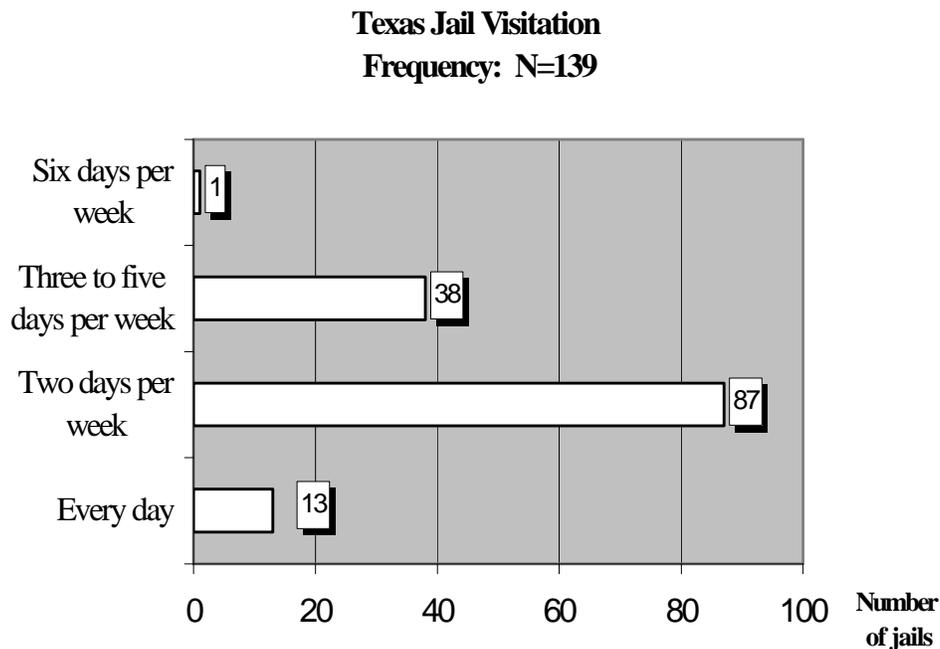
Jails are required to make arrangements for inmates to have periodic visits from relatives and friends (TCJS, 2000). Official visits such as those by lawyers or ministers are not usually governed by the same regulations as those of general visitation. In addition to providing the inmate with comfort and companionship, visitation affords the prisoner the opportunity to take care of personnel tasks such as having property transferred to the proper individuals, making decisions concerning child rearing and other important life needs. Efficient visitation can improve inmate morale and thereby influence a more positive environment in the jail.

We wanted to determine how often and for how long visitation was allowed in Texas jails. The survey included questions asking administrators the details of their visitation procedures. They were asked how often inmates were allowed to have visitors. Possible choices included "every day", "one day each week", "two days each week" and "other". **Figure 40** summarizes the answers recorded.

A total of 139 respondents answered this question. More than six in ten jails permitted inmates to have visitors two days each week. A total of 87 jails followed this schedule. A sizable number, 38 jails, permitted inmates to have visitors from three to five days each week. Thirteen jails permitted inmates to have visitors every day. One jail permitted inmates to have visitors once every six days.

We also asked administrators how long each visit lasted. One hundred and forty administrators responded to this question. The most common answer given was 20 minutes. Ninety-eight managers (70%) of the group reported visits of 20 minutes. Another 24 (17.1%) reported visits of 30 minutes. Eleven (7.9%) reported visits of one hour and four reported visits of 15 minutes. One respondent reported visits of 45 minutes. Two managers reported unlimited

visits within reason. We found a wide diversity among different jails regarding time frames for inmate visitation.



**Figure 40: Number of Days Jail Visits Are Allowed**

We asked administrators the level of importance that they placed on inmate visitation. Of the 139 reporting administrators, 74 (53.3%) responded that they saw visitation as "high importance". Another 65 (46.8%) rated visitation as "some importance". All of the respondents viewed inmate visitation as an operation with some level of importance. No administrators rated visitation as either "little importance" or "no importance". We concluded that managers rated the importance of inmate visitation as extremely high in comparison to all other operations.

Finally we asked the group to express their level of satisfaction with their existing inmate visitation program. Of the 137 respondents who answered this question, 43 (31.7%) marked "very satisfied". An additional 78 (56.9%) marked "satisfied". Almost nine of ten administrators expressed some level of satisfaction with inmate visitation. Seven respondents (5.1%) marked "dissatisfied" and no managers rated visitation as "very dissatisfied". Only one in 20 managers expressed any degree of dissatisfaction and no managers expressed extreme dissatisfaction. The remaining nine or 6.6% registered their rating as "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied". We concluded that administrators were content, for the most part, with current inmate visitation programs.

### ***Inmate Recreation***

Texas jail systems are required to permit inmates the opportunity to participate in recreational activities for a minimum of three hours per week (TCJS, 2000). These activities are stated in addition to "day room" time allotted in the living quarters. Outside recreation is recommended and fresh air and sunlight are required. Specific inmate recreation programs and schedules are a function of facility layout as well as policy. Some jails have the luxury of secure outside space adjacent to living quarters for recreational use. Other jails are designed to conduct inmate recreation on rooftops or where ever adequate space can be arranged.

More modern facilities often include many smaller recreational units adjacent to living areas with security equipment installed. The advantage of this design is that inmates can quickly and easily be admitted to the recreational area without violating the classification integrity that requires separation of certain classes of inmates. The chief disadvantage is, of course, the cost of constructing multiple recreation areas.

More traditional designs include a large recreation "yard" where groups of inmates are permitted to congregate. This practice requires additional searches and security measures to insure that certain inmates are not permitted to intermingle with others. In larger systems it is not uncommon for two or three extremely high-risk prisoners to be scheduled for recreation in a large area. This practice is inefficient because it ties up the entire area for a relatively few inmates leaving less opportunity for all the others to be scheduled.

In order to determine which type of inmate recreation approach was used in each facility we structured question number 88 to read:

**Which of the following statements best describes your inmate recreation?**

**Inmates congregate in large outside recreation areas for sessions of one to two hours.**

**Inmates congregate in large outside recreation areas for sessions of more than two hours.**

**Inmates use small recreational areas adjacent to their cell blocks frequently.**

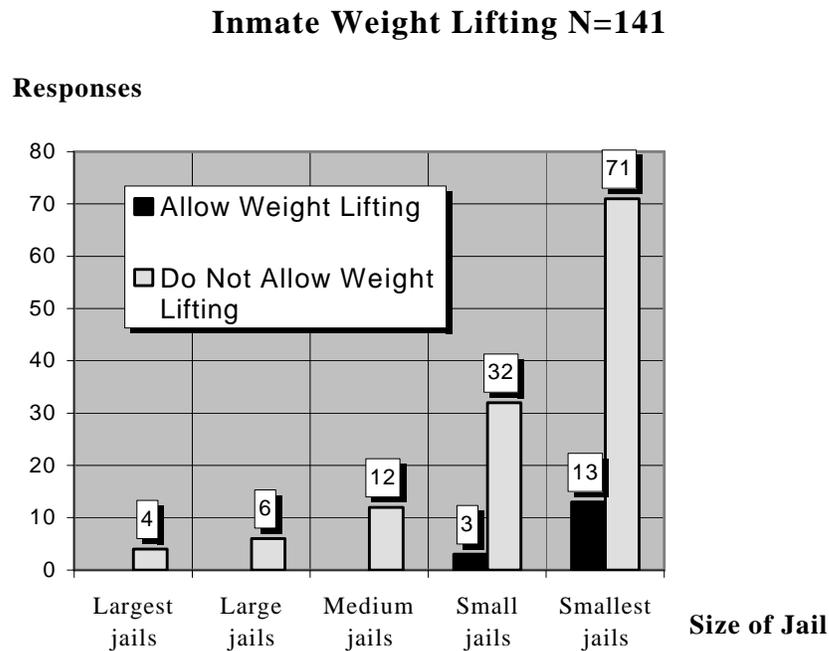
**Inmates use small recreational areas adjacent to their cell blocks in one to two hour sessions.**

**Other**

According to the results of our survey, the most common type of inmate recreation system was the large outside area used for one to two hour sessions. Of the 141 respondents, 84 (59.6%) used this arrangement. A total of 29 respondents (20.6%) reported using small areas adjacent to the cell block for periods of one to two hours. Another 14 managers (9.9%) of the total used small areas adjacent to the cell block more frequently. One respondent reported using a large area for sessions of more than two hours. A relatively large number of respondents, 13 (9.2%) reported "other". The comments accompanying the responses indicated that most of the "other" category notations were actually some variation of the above listed categories that, because of design nuances, did not lend themselves to clear definition. We concluded that most jails used the large "yard" approach to recreation, but that a substantial number used smaller areas adjacent to the inmate's living quarters.

Many movies, books and television programs depict convicts congregating in recreation yards and lifting weights to develop strong bodies for their criminal enterprises. To test whether this perception was myth or reality in Texas jails, we asked administrators whether or not they allowed "weight lifting" as a legitimate part of inmate recreation. Surprisingly, an overwhelming majority stated that they did *not* allow weight lifting in recreation. Of the 141 respondents, 125 (88.7%) reported that weight lifting was not allowed! The remaining 16 respondents (11.3%) of those surveyed reported that weight lifting was allowed. Interestingly, all 16 who did allow

weight lifting came from the *smallest* category jails (13) or the *small* category jail (three). No administrators in the *medium, large* or *largest* jails permitted weight lifting (See **Figure 41.**)



**Figure 41: Jails That Allow Inmates to Lift Weights**

We concluded that the stereotype of inmates lifting weights as a recreational pastime could not be justified in fact as far as Texas jails are concerned.

We asked administrators to place a relative importance factor on their inmate recreation system. Of 138 reporting, 71 (51.4%) rated inmate recreation as "high importance" and another 63 (45.7%) rated it as "some importance". Only four respondents (2.9%) rated inmate recreation as "little importance". No administrators assessed recreation as "no importance". Manager ratings reflected a fairly high importance for inmate recreation.

Respondents also commented on their satisfaction with inmate recreation. One hundred and forty administrators completed this section. Thirty-one of the 140 (22.1%) expressed "very satisfied" referring to inmate recreation. An additional 77 (55%) marked the category "satisfied". A sum of 77% expressed some level of satisfaction with their recreation program. Of the remaining managers 13 (9.3%) marked "dissatisfied" and none marked "dissatisfied". Less than 10% of respondents expressed a level of dissatisfaction. A rather large group, 19 (13.6%) stated that they were "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" with the inmate recreation effort. The jail administrators expressed a general level of satisfaction in this area.

### ***Inmate Work Programs***

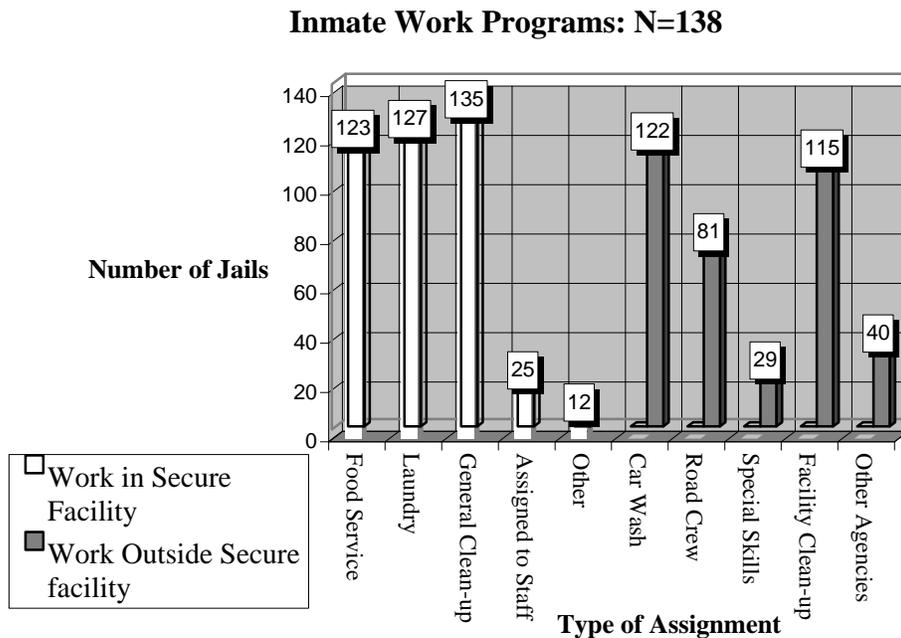
Criminal justice professionals have expressed a preference for instilling the "work ethic" in prisoners since the advent of modern corrections (Gaines, Kaune & Miller, 2000; Allen & Simonsen, 1995) Texas jails, like most in the country, encourage inmates to perform work tasks.

Not only do required tasks get accomplished without costs to the institution, but inmates receive a positive and meaningful experience that *may* contribute to rehabilitation. In most instances inmates prefer to work because it gives them extended time in productive endeavors and it gives them the opportunity to leave the boredom of their living quarters for some periods of time. In addition, many workers receive rewards such as extra food or snacks in exchange for their work efforts. A certain positive status may also be associated with work assignments (National Institute of Corrections, 1992).

Two general types of work assignments were considered in the study. The first involved those inmates who performed assignments in the secure confines of the facility itself. Obviously, some inmates who cannot be placed in a "free world" work environment for security reasons can function well in a secure kitchen, laundry or cell block area. We asked administrators if they used inmate labor for any of the following assignments:

- Food service workers
- Laundry workers
- General clean-up workers
- Assigned to correctional staff
- Other

Managers were instructed to check one or more of the above as applicable. Results appear as a portion of **Figure 42**. Almost all of the 138 managers reported using inmates for clean up. A total of 135 (97.8%) assigned inmates to such duty. A total of 127 of the group



**Figure 42: Inmate Work Programs in Texas Jails**

(92%) reported using inmates for laundry duty. Of the total, 123 (89.1%) reported assigning inmates to assist in the preparation of meals. Fewer systems reported using inmates for assignment to correctional staff. Only 25 respondents (18.3%) reported assigning inmates to staff members. Another twelve respondents listed assignment to "other " categories.

A second category of inmate work assignment involves placing low risk inmates outside the secured area of the facility for work details. **Figure 42** also illustrates the placement of these subjects. The most common outside assignment was at the "car wash". Of the 138 reporting managers, 122 (88.4%) assigned inmates to the "car wash". The other popular placement was "facility clean up" with 115 (83.9%) of the institutions reporting placement. A total of 81 departments or 58.7% maintained "road crews" staffed with inmate workers. This, no doubt, was in response to popular support of such programs. Forty managers representing 29% of the respondents reported assigning inmates to other county agencies for work purposes. Only 29 jurisdictions representing 21.1% of the respondents assigned inmates to special skilled positions.

We asked if "outside workers" were screened by classification before placement. Almost all of the respondents, 132 of 138 (96%) of the total replied that their classification section screened workers before assignment. At least two of the six managers who answered that classification did not screen workers noted in the "comments" portion of the report that a screening system was followed by the administration. We concluded that virtually all systems conducted in-depth screening before placing inmates in outside work programs.

Managers rated their perceived importance of inmate work programs. A total of 139 respondents completed this section. Eighty-four (60.4%) classed inmate work programs as "high importance". Fifty managers representing 36% of the group rated work programs as "some importance" and the remaining five managers classed work programs as "little importance". No respondents rated inmate work programs as "no importance".

### ***Facility Issues***

A number of administrative issues deal with the jail facility itself. We attempted to determine how old present Texas jail facilities are. The del Carmen report addressed this issue in 1990 by concluding that the oldest used structure at that time was opened in 1874 and that the average age for local jails was 24 years old (del Carmen et al., 1990). We modified our questionnaire to omit older facilities that have been renovated. We noted in our instructions:

**If the facility underwent major renovation, state the renovation date.**

In this manner those facilities that have effectively been "rebuilt" will reflect the more recent date of occupancy. **Table 9** lists facility age as reported by jail administrators. Note that 132 administrators representing the same number of jail systems reported facility age. In the case of several larger systems, multiple facilities are reported so the total number of facilities is 158. Three managers could not supply opening dates for facilities.

Four county jails reported in the survey date to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and an additional two were built prior to 1920. Only three jails reported in the survey were opened between 1921 and 1940. Fourteen reported facilities opened between 1941 and 1960. Twenty-one facilities built between 1961 and 1980 are reported. A number of new facilities were opened between 1981 and 1990. Respondents reported a total of 58 present facilities opened during this period. A total of 56 new jails were reported in the survey that opened during the past eleven years. The average age of all structures reported was 37 years. This figure may be skewed toward a higher average because of the few jails that have been in operation for several decades or more.

**Table 9: Age of Texas Jail Facilities N=132**

Opening Date	Number of Facilities	Present Age of Facility
Prior to 1900	4	105 to 117 years
1901 through 1920	2	81 to 100 years
1921 through 1940	3	61 to 80 years
1941 through 1960	14	41 to 60 years
1961 through 1980	21	21 through 40 years
1981 through 1990	58	11 through 20 years
1991 through 2001	56	Through 10 years
Unknown	N/A	N/A

Figure 43 presents essentially the same information as depicted in Table 9. The graphic illustrates how that certain historical time periods have yielded greater jail construction booms than others. Note that a total of 58 jails were opened between 1981 and 1990 and that an

Age of Texas Jail Facilities: N=132

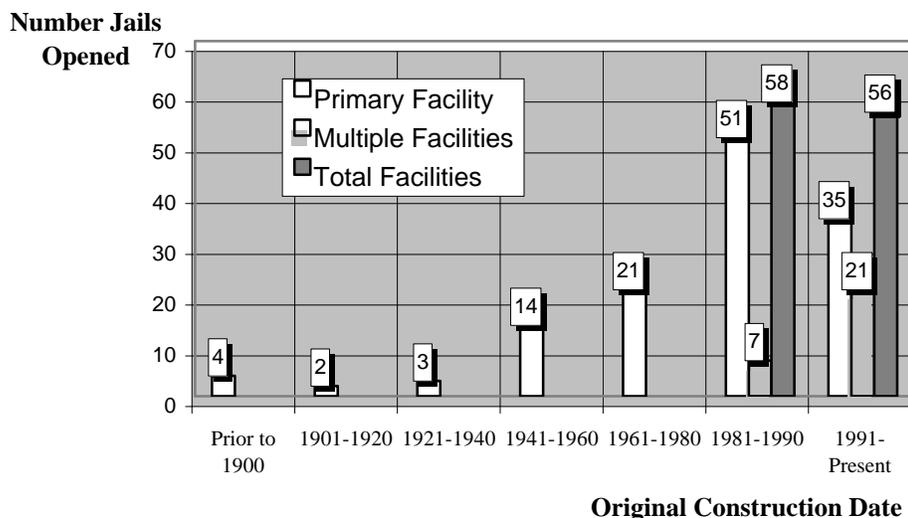


Figure 43: Texas Jail Facilities with Opening Dates

another 56 were opened between 1991 and the present. Also, the larger systems have built additional facilities during the last twenty years.

We asked administrators if they were in the process of planning or building new facilities. Thirty answered "yes". In the original del Carmen report, 21% of the respondents answered that they were in the process of planning a new facility (del Carmen et al., 1990). Remarkably, we found that 21.3% of our respondents were planning a new facility. We then instructed this group to complete three additional entries. First we asked them when the new facility was to be completed. We asked what security level was planned for the new facility and we asked what type of inmate management was planned for the new facility.

Of the 30 who were planning a new facility, 17 were able to supply target "move in" dates ranging from 2001 to 2005. Seven planned for maximum security facilities, one for a minimum-security unit and 18 planned for facilities with multiple security levels. Six had not determined what security level would be proposed. Of the 30 respondents, 13 planned a podular remote inmate management facility; nine planned a direct supervision facility and three planned a linear facility. We noted that even though managers generally rejected the concept of *direct supervision* in Question number 20, those who were actually involved in planning for new facilities chose *direct supervision* more frequently. The other six were not certain which type of management system to use.

### ***Security Practices***

Earlier in this paper administrators addressed the issue of the essential purposes of local jails. They agreed, for the most part, that jails were established to keep criminals off the street and thereby protect the public interest. In addition, most expressed the belief that some level of rehabilitation was appropriate in county jails. At times the legitimate security interests of the institution may conflict with programming interests. If one wishes to provide "absolute" and "total" security, no education programs should be allowed, no work programs should be allowed, visitation and recreation should be severely limited and inmate movement should be restricted to a minimum. Few reasonable managers would advocate such a system.

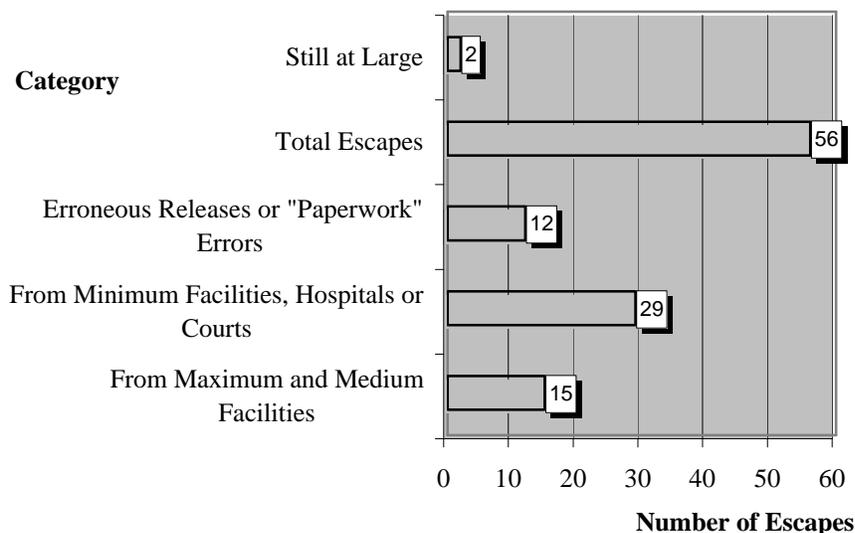
By the same logic, one must also reject the notion of a system that ignores basic security. A jail without essential security cannot accomplish its primary objectives. Jail security is a relative concept that must be considered in the overall scope of institutional goals. Total security is impractical but a complete disregard for security would be disastrous! How much jail security is enough? We polled our managers to determine what evidence of appropriate security was available. We then asked them to evaluate their satisfaction with their security systems; albeit those responses represented subjective evaluations.

We first addressed the general area of escape from custody. This topic emphasizes the duality of purpose that may confront the administrator. If a system organizes extensive inmate work programs and inmate education programs, the risks of inmate escapes will be greater because prisoners are given more opportunity to attempt escape. If the system implements policies designed to keep inmates in cell blocks for longer periods of time and restrict inmate movement, the risks of escapes will be less. It is therefore an oversimplification to conclude that "the fewer escapes, the better the jail."

Escapes may be classified into several general categories. Rarely, prisoners attempt daring escapades by chipping through solid walls or infiltrating the vent work of a maximum-security facility. While these escapes make for entertaining film, they do not occur with significant frequency. A second and more common type of escape occurs when an inmate is taken from the security of the prison proper or is housed in a minimum-security unit. Most courts and hospitals are not built with proper security measures in place and present an ideal setting for escape. Even the most dangerous prisoners have occasion to be in court or visit the hospital. A third type of escape occurs when paper work is not organized to reflect the correct procedures concerning an individual. An "erroneous release" may result when an individual is mistakenly released early or when another prisoner is released instead of the subject who is due to be released.

Question number 98 asked administrators how many escapes from custody in each of these categories occurred during the calendar year 2000. **Figure 44** presents the responses given.

**Escapes from Custody, 2000: N=138**



**Figure 44: Escapes From Texas Jails; 2000**

In some instances managers estimated the numbers. A total of 15 escapes were reported from maximum or medium-security facilities. Almost twice that number, 29, were reported from minimum-security facilities, hospitals or courts. Twelve escapes were classed as "paperwork errors" making a total of 56 escapes for the entire year. Interestingly, all but two of the escapees have subsequently been returned to custody.

We attempted to determine the incidence of violence in jails by asking administrators questions concerning assaults by inmates. The term "assault" is subject to wide interpretation by different individuals. Using a rigid standard it may be accomplished if one merely "brushes" another. To further define the term, we asked how many *serious* assaults occurred between inmates and staff. Responses indicated that 47 serious assaults between inmates and staff occurred in the year 2000. Of those incidents, less than one half or 21 resulted in serious injury to either party and none resulted in death.

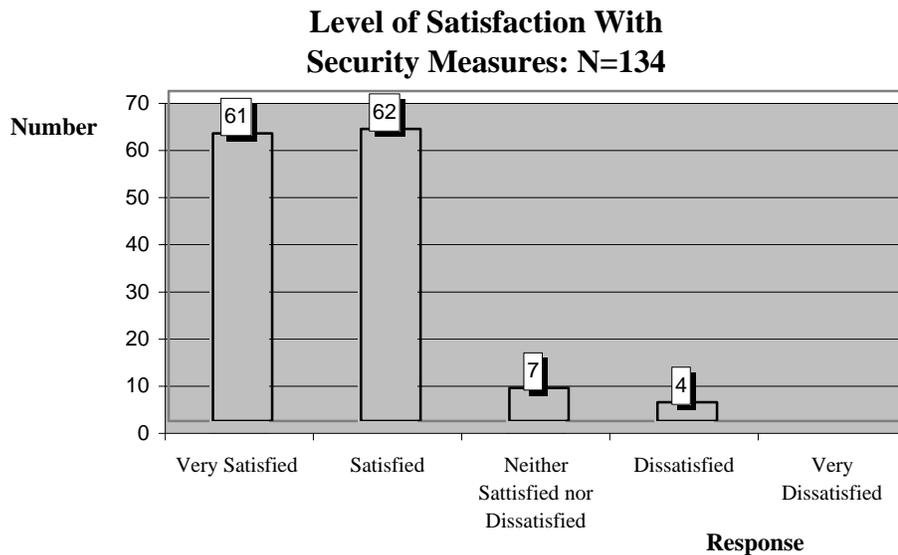
A more common occurrence was violence among inmates. We asked how many serious assaults occurred among inmates in the year 2000. Respondents reported that a total of 295 occurred. As a follow-up question we asked how many of these assaults resulted in serious injury. Administrators reported that 57 or approximately one in five resulted in serious injury. No deaths were reported as a result of these assaults.

Since prisoners undergo intensive emotional stress in a jail environment, administrators must constantly maintain programmatic guards against potential suicides. We asked respondents how many attempted suicides occurred in their facilities in the year 2000 and how many of these were successful. The managers reported that in 135 systems that were represented by responses,

a total of 179 suicide attempts occurred. Obviously, the definition of "attempted suicide" might be interpreted differently depending on what standard is chosen. Of these attempts, only 19 or slightly more than one in ten resulted in actual suicides.

Interpretation of these data presents unique challenges. The nature of escapes, assaults and suicides make *any* occurrence regrettable. We were unable to draw valid comparisons with either the del Carmen et al. (1990) state-wide study or the national study compiled by Camp and Camp (2000). Even though the national rates of assault reported by Camp and Camp (2000) on inmates as well as on staff were considerably higher than those reported in the present study, we could not determine the criteria used to define important terms. While we do not conclude that the rates of violent behavior in Texas jails are acceptable, we note that, given the massive numbers of individuals included in the inmate populations and given the nature of these individual's past behaviors, reported violence is remarkably low.

Administrators were asked to assign an importance value to security issues. As expected, they rated security as an area of extremely high importance. Of 138 managers who completed this section, 132 (95.7%) classed security as "high importance". Six, or the remaining 4.3% marked the response "some importance". No managers marked either "little importance" or "no importance". Of all operational categories in the entire survey, security was judged the most important.



**Figure 45: Manager's Satisfaction Level With Security Operations**

We asked administrators to rate their level of satisfaction with their security systems. **Figure 45** summarizes their responses. Of 134 who answered this inquiry, 61 (45.5%) chose the response "very satisfied". A similar number, 62 (46.3%) chose the response "satisfied". Almost 92% answered with responses noting some level of satisfaction. Four managers representing 3% of the total group noted the response "dissatisfied". The remaining seven administrators (5.2%)

of the group marked the answer "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied". In general, jail administrators seemed satisfied with their security operations.

### ***Emergency Response***

A number of jurisdictions have developed special military-style response teams to take action when major disturbances occur in the prison or jail. We use the general term *emergency response team* to refer to these units although they are officially classed by a number of acronyms or other names. While the advantages of a specially trained unit are obvious, a number of disadvantages often accompany them. These disadvantages include:

They require expensive equipment such as weapons, riot shields and disabling apparatus.

They must undergo extensive and continual training that cost money and precludes the members from other assignments while training is in progress.

They are not needed in normal situations.

Without proper direction they can become an "elitist" sub-group.

They must be subject to muster whether on duty or off duty which impacts overtime policy.

We wished to determine how many jails in Texas used emergency response teams, how administrators rated their importance and how satisfied administrators were with their performance. Question number 104 asked:

**How many major disturbances or riots occurred in your facilities from Jan. 1, 2000 through Dec. 31, 2000?**

Of 136 managers answering this question, 132 (97%) replied "none". Three answered that one such incident occurred and one answered that two incidents occurred. Please note that although major disturbances are rare, when they do occur it is imperative that proper responsive action ensues.

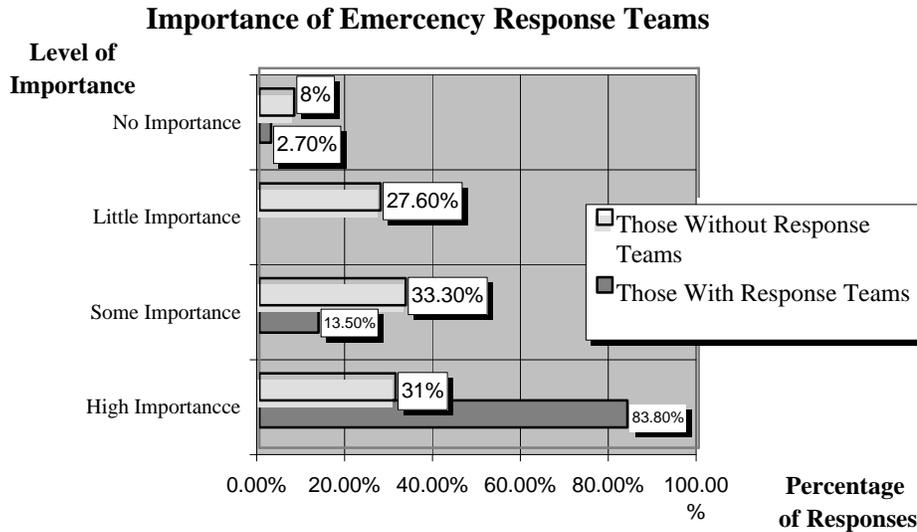
We asked if administrators maintained a trained and equipped emergency response team and, if so, how often they were called into service. Of 138 respondents, 37 reported that they did maintain a response team and 101 did not. Of those that reported response teams 12 were from the *smallest* jails, 11 from *small* jails, five from *medium* jails, five from *large* jails and four from the *largest* jails. Emergency response teams were used in all size jails. Nine of the respondents who reported an emergency response team answered that they were called out on one or more occasions. The remaining 28 managers did not respond to that section of the question regarding number of call outs.

We then asked all administrators how much importance they placed on emergency response teams. Results are shown in **Figure 46**.

When answers from the entire group of 106 respondents were examined, a wide range of diversity appeared. Fifty-eight individuals (54.7%) of the group rated the importance of response teams as "very important". Another 34 individuals (32.1%) rated response teams as "some importance". A relatively large group of 24 managers (22.6%) of the total rated response teams as "little importance". The remaining eight members rated response teams as "no importance".

We then examined both those managers who reported having emergency response teams and those who reported not having response teams. The group composed of managers with

emergency response teams rated the team as more important than the group without response teams (See **Figure 46**). More than 83% of the managers with response teams marked "high importance" while only 31% of the individuals without response teams marked "high importance". Of the 37 members with response teams, five rated teams as "some importance". A full one third or 29 of the 87 without teams rated response teams as "some importance". No managers from the group with response teams rated them as "little importance" but 24 of those from the group without teams rated them as "little importance". One manager from the group



**Figure 46: Importance of Emergency Response Teams as Rated by Managers**

with response teams rated them as "no importance" while seven members or 8% of the group without teams rated them as "no importance". The relative importance of emergency response teams seemed to depend on which group was asked. According to those with emergency teams, they were highly important; but to those without teams they were relatively unimportant.

We also asked for respondents' level of satisfaction with their ability to respond to emergency situations. Of 128 administrators who answered this question, 42 or 32.8% chose "very satisfied". An additional 63 (49.2%) marked "satisfied". Therefore, more than eight of ten expressed some level of satisfaction. Seven of the group (5.5%) marked "dissatisfied". A small minority expressed dissatisfaction although none reported "very dissatisfied". The remaining 16 managers, a rather high proportion at 12.5% of the total, marked "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied". Even though administrators disagreed over the merits of emergency response teams, they seemed fairly comfortable in their level of satisfaction with their ability to provide emergency response.

**Survey Part 3: Administrative Issues**

The final section of the survey considers a variety of issues that address areas of particular concern for Texas jail managers. We look at the use of e-mail as a means of expediting required reports for TCJS and we poll respondents to determine how different jurisdictions deal with municipal and county prisoners charged with Class "C" misdemeanors. In addition, we analyze attitudes toward resolving grievances from both inmates and staff and we attempt to describe general working conditions and staff morale. Administrators then evaluate a series of topics to determine the most pressing issues facing Texas jail administrators.

### ***"e-mail" as a Means of Reporting***

The TCJS requires all Texas jails to submit regular monthly reports concerning the status of inmates in custody. This process is meticulous and can be time consuming. Local jail officials tally required information (usually from computer generated programs), transpose data into the required formats, sign and photocopy the completed forms and mail them to the TCJS headquarters in Austin, Texas. In Austin, the TCJS staff sorts and verifies incoming reports, transposes them into an appropriate format, queries the originator by mail or telephone if the information contains errors or inappropriate data and files reports accordingly. The process is not particularly efficient. Reports reflecting current information on the first of a month are usually not published until the tenth to fifteenth of that month.

At the request of TCJS officials, we asked local administrators if an e-mail reporting system could be used for more efficient processing of documents and forms. First, we asked representatives of local jails if they had existing e-mail capabilities in their jail. We then asked if they would favor using e-mail as an alternative to regular mail.

Of 126 responses from administrators, 59 (46.8%) stated that they did *not* have e-mail access although several commented that e-mail would be installed in the near future. The remaining 53.2% stated that they did have e-mail access. We were surprised at the large number not having e-mail access. Perhaps some of the respondents interpreted the phrase "at your jail" to mean inside the secured confines of the jail rather than within the administrative areas where jail business is normally conducted. At any rate, a slight majority reported having e-mail access.

Of the 126 respondents answering the inquiry, 102 (81%) stated they were in favor of using e-mail for reporting. The remaining 19% (24) individuals expressed opposition to e-mail. When we analyzed the responses of only those administrators who reported having existing e-mail access, we found that 90.8% were in favor of the automated system as opposed to only 9.2% who expressed opposition. These data suggested that e-mail was more popular with those who already had e-mail than those who did not have the service.

After carefully considering the information reported, we concluded that an e-mail reporting system should be initiated by the TCJS. Appropriate start-up exceptions should be made for those who do not have e-mail capabilities at the present time. The technology can no longer be viewed as a passing "fad" and should be incorporated into daily routines. This will require limited expenditure from local sources but such requirements are minimal and the system will reduce overall spending through increased efficiencies. For those who argue that inmates might gain access to a dangerous tool, it can be argued that we already make provisions through policy regulation to have kitchen utensils, firearms and dangerous chemicals into the general proximity of our jails. This issue can be addressed through appropriate internal policy.

### ***Housing of Class "C" Misdemeanants***

Persons charged with violation of municipal ordinances or class "C" misdemeanors are normally cited rather than incarcerated (Texas Penal Code Title 3, Chapter 12.23, 1993.). These individuals may be processed through the county jail and held for brief periods, or they may be processed and held in institutions operated or contracted by the arresting law enforcement agency. We asked respondents if they housed class "C" misdemeanants in the county jail. If they answered "yes", they were instructed to choose the best description from one of the following alternatives:

- Yes, we house county class "C's" but we do not house any city class "C's".**
- Yes, we house county class "C's" and some city class "C's" but some cities use other facilities.**
- Yes, we house all county and city class "C's" within this county.**
- Other, please explain.**

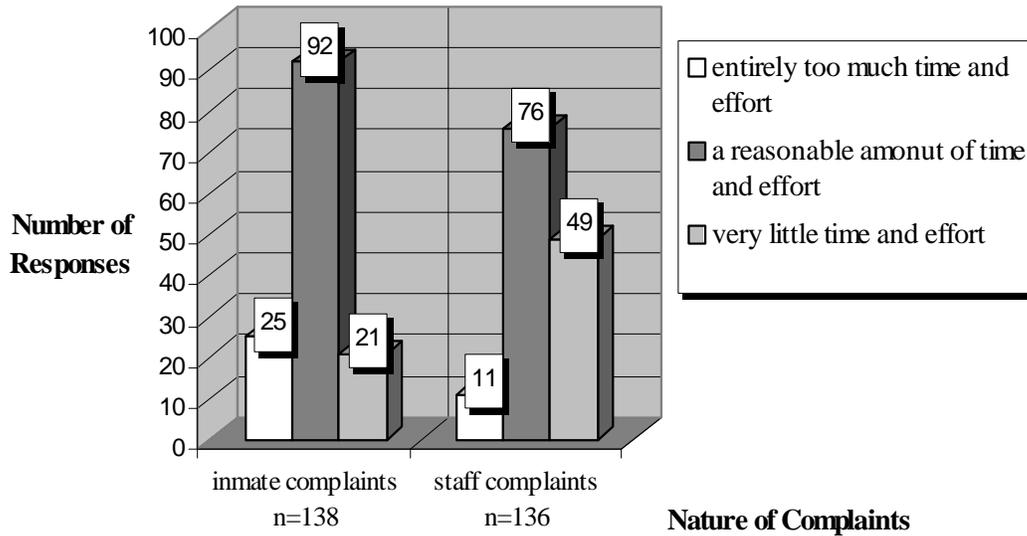
A total of 139 administrators completed this question. Seven (5.1%) reported that did not house any class "C" misdemeanants in the jail. The largest portion of the respondents, 93 (slightly more than two thirds) answered that they housed all county and city class "C's" in the county jail. Nine managers (6.1%) of the respondents answered that they housed county class "C's" but did not house any city class "C's". A total of 22 managers (16.1%) of the group answered that they housed county class "C's" and some city class "C's". The remaining four checked the "other" category. We concluded that most county jails, approximately two out of three, housed both those charged with class "C" violations by both city and county police authorities. We also note that smaller counties may not have the inmate volume recorded by larger counties and the housing of these few city prisoners may amount to an occasional inconvenience.

### ***Complaints***

Much of any administrator's time is spent resolving complaints and grievances brought about by either staff or clients. Most jail systems have elaborate procedures in place to insure that valid grievances can be redressed efficiently and properly. We were curious to know if jail administrators themselves felt that they spent an inordinate amount of time and effort resolving disputes or complaints, especially minor or frivolous matters. Questions 108 and 109 asked managers if they and their administrative staff spent too much time and effort resolving inmate's minor complaints (Question 108) and staff's minor complaints (Question 109). Questions were worded so that respondents chose from three alternative answers including "entirely too much time and effort", "a reasonable amount of time and effort" and "very little time and effort".

A total of 138 respondents completed the question on inmate complaints and grievances and 136 completed the question on staff complaints and grievances. Responses to these inquiries are reported in **Figure 47**. An overwhelming majority reported that they spent either a

## Administrative time Spent Resolving Minor Complaints



**Figure 47: Time Spent by Managers Resolving Minor Complaints**

"reasonable amount of time and effort" or "very little time and effort" in resolving complaints by either staff or inmates. Almost 82% of those responding answered that they spent either "very little time" or "a reasonable amount of time" resolving inmates' minor complaints. Approximately 92% of those polled answered that they spent either "very little time" or "a reasonable amount of time" resolving staff's minor complaints. A relatively small percentage did report spending an inordinate amount of time and effort resolving minor complaints. Twenty-five managers (18.1%) reported "entirely too much time and effort" regarding the resolution of minor complaints by inmates and eleven (8.1%) reported spending "entirely too much time and effort" on resolving minor complaints by staff. In summary, we believe that an appropriate amount of time and effort is actually consumed because those responses indicating too much time spent are roughly equal to those indicating very little time spent in the resolution of these complaints.

### ***Staff Morale***

Employee morale may be an evasive concept that transcends those standard parameters available for wide scale examination. To a large extent, staff morale is probably a function of local personalities, pay rates, issues and extraneous factors that fall beyond the scope of this study. Our intent was to define commonalities that may or may not exist statewide in local jails rather than evaluating individual jail systems. We asked managers to evaluate the overall morale of their staff by choosing one of the following descriptive responses:

**Morale is extremely high for almost all employees.**

**Morale is high for most employees but a few disgruntled individuals complain.**

**Overall morale is about average.**

**Morale is fairly low for jail employees.**

**Morale is dangerously low for jail employees.**

Of 139 administrators who responded to this entry, 20 (14.4%) evaluated their personnel's morale as "extremely high". Almost one third or 45 administrators rated morale as "high" with exceptions for a few disgruntled employees. In other words, almost one half of the respondents rated employee morale in the high categories. Only 7 respondents representing 5% of all reporting administrators rated their employee morale as "fairly low". No respondents checked the "dangerously low" category. Almost one half or 67 managers rated employee morale as "about average". These data, when viewed collectively, indicate a reasonably acceptable level for employee morale.

### ***Working Conditions***

Employee working conditions are related to morale and certainly influence personnel morale. In the specific case of county jails, one would expect a somewhat negative conditions rating because of the very nature of jails is negative by basic definition. With these caveats in mind, and realizing the subjective nature of the question, we asked managers to describe their facilities in terms of employee working conditions. Possible responses included excellent, good, fair, poor and deplorable.

Managers rated working conditions as higher than expected. A total of 138 respondents answered the question and 25 (18.1%) marked "excellent". Another 78 administrators representing 56.5% of the group rated working conditions as "good". In all, almost three of four administrators gave high marks of "good" or "excellent". Of the total group, 31 (22.5%) rated working conditions as "fair". If we interpret "fair" to mean minimally acceptable, a full 97% saw working conditions in the jail as acceptable. Only four managers representing less than 3% of the group marked working conditions as "poor". According to Texas jail administrators, working conditions in Texas jails are generally fair to excellent. Only a small percentage of respondents classed conditions as "poor".

### ***Issues of Concern***

We attempted to determine which specific issues presented the greatest problems or challenges to the jail administrators. To accomplish our goal, we chose nine areas that were selected by our advisory group as topics for evaluation. They included:

- Inmate medical costs**
- Inmate mental health services**
- Inmate lawsuits**
- Jail and prison "gang activity"**
- Overtime**
- Overcrowding**
- Staff Training**
- Employee groups and unions**
- Working within budget**

We then asked administrators to rate each issue based on the degree of problems that the issue presented to the general administration of the jail. Categories for each issue included high, medium and low. After receiving the ratings we assigned a point value to each issue based on one point for low, two points for medium and three points for high. We divided the cumulative points for each entry by the number of managers assigning points to determine an average for each category. Results of this procedure appear in *Table 10*. Of all issues listed, administrators

**Table 10: Issues of Importance to Texas Jail Administrators**

Issue	High	Medium	Low	Number of Responses	Cumulative Rating	Average	Rank Order
<b>Medical Costs</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>2.420</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Budget</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>1.957</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Staff Training</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>1.949</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Overtime</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>1.706</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Overcrowding</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>1.543</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Mental Health</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>1.217</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Inmate Lawsuits</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>1.161</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Prison Gangs</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>1.139</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Employee Groups</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>1.051</b>	<b>9</b>

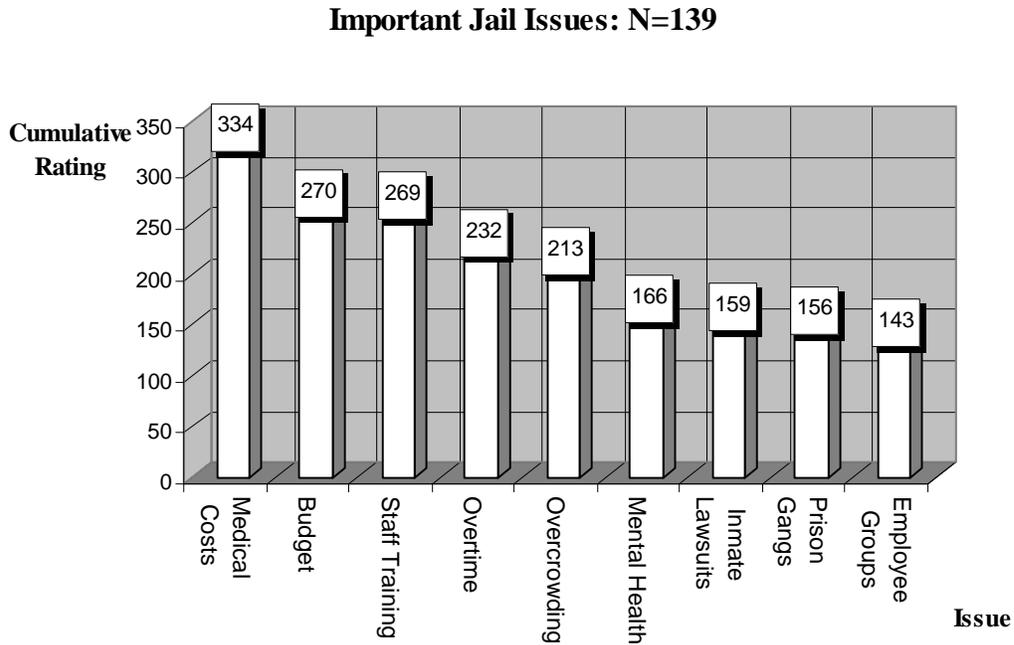
rated "medical costs" as the single most important problem facing jail management. The ability to work within "budget" restraints was listed as the second highest problem area followed closely by "staff training". "Overtime", "overcrowding" and "mental health" were listed as intermediate problem areas. "Inmate lawsuits", "prison gangs" and problems associated with "employee groups and unions" were judged the items causing the lowest level of problems for jail administrators. A representation of cumulative ratings by each issue is shown in *Figure 48*. This graphic demonstrates the quantitative relationships among the various issues

In 1990 del Carmen et al. listed the five most critical problems as reported by jail administrators (1990.). They were, in order of importance:

- 1. Overcrowding**
- 2. Budget problems**
- 3. Staff problems**
- 4. Medical**

## 5. Physical building problems

Because of the difference in research methodology used, we were not able to directly duplicate the del Carmen study but we were able to address some of the same topics. Whereas "overcrowding" was considered the most important issue facing jail managers in 1990, it rated



**Figure 48: Jail Issues By Order of Importance**

only fifth in the list of nine presented by our survey. This reduction in ranking was no doubt caused by the availability of extra beds in today's jail environment. "Budget problems" ranked second in the del Carmen study and remain at that level in the present study. "Staff problems" were listed as the third most important area of concern in 1990. While our study did not define a variable using that particular term, "staff training" and "overtime" ranked third and fourth respectively in the more recent survey. "Medical" issues were listed fourth in 1990 but "medical costs" were the most important problem as defined by our group of administrators. The extreme rise in health care costs over the past decade and the growing concern for quality health care probably contributed to the high ranking of this issue. Neither "inmate lawsuits" nor "prison gangs" rated particularly high in either study.

*Key Implications*

It is customary to prepare a summation of findings in a report of this nature and draw those logical conclusions that may direct others toward a more thorough understanding of the subject matter. Theoretically, the researcher should present a concise blueprint for future endeavor. However, the present case does not lend itself to such standardization or precision. The underlying dynamic of this work remains exploratory and descriptive rather than analytical or predictive. We introduced the study by describing local jails as *misunderstood, perplexing and confusing*. After plodding through a lengthy examination of the existing state of affairs in Texas jails, the reader must concur with this assessment. Indeed, Texas county jails represent a vast collection of widely divergent cultural institutions where innovation coexists with tradition. At times the differences among jails seem to overshadow any shared commonalties. Therefore, we have opted to present a series of summary conclusions that help describe, in the broadest sense, the nature of Texas county jails. These statements by category serve to summarize those highlights that seem to be indicative of larger trends. Obviously, further research is imperative to bring about any definitive conclusion. We strongly encourage such study.

### **Size of the Jail**

*The Number of inmates housed is the single most important factor in jail analysis.* This study emphasizes, time and again, the immense differences between large jails and small jails. Whether the topic of interest is pay rates for corrections officers or commissary management or security measures, size of jail is *the* crucial factor. Comparing a small West Texas jail with the Dallas or Harris County Jail is like comparing a motorcycle with a Boeing 777! To be sure, both are machines depending on a mechanical power source, and both are designed to carry people from one point to another; but differences far outweigh those similarities of purpose. Neither large jails nor small jails are inherently better than the other; they are merely different institutions with differing goals, structures and traditions. Standards should not be compromised for the sake of jail size. Minimum requirements should apply across the giant board; but interpretations must take jail size into account.

### **Research Methodology**

*The study of local jails can only be successful if the researcher understands the particular administrative, political, cultural and operational nuances applicable to the situation.* Methodological "pitfalls" were discussed at length earlier in the report. It is important that local practitioners supply guidance to the academicians in conducting jail research. Otherwise, results may point to erroneous conclusions. The researcher must have a full understanding of the system being studied in its full operational context. It is worth noting that every system is unique. True expertise entails an understanding of the specific system being considered. Jails should be analyzed individually as well as collectively.

### **Use of Existing Data Sources**

*When possible, social scientists should utilize existing data as the basis for jail research.* Government agencies are notorious for collecting immense volumes of information relative to clients and programs but never applying any analytical measures to help clarify or provide understanding of their true meaning. We demonstrated how jail inmate records maintained by the TCJS can be used to verify population trends and thereby provide a valuable administrative tool for policy development. This type of approach is efficient and productive because it applies existing resources to the solution of common problems. We recommend an expansion of this approach to jail study.

## **Corrections Philosophy**

*Texas jail administrators maintain a traditional corrections philosophy concerning the purposes of incarceration.* Local administrators in Texas support all four of the prevailing theories of jail purpose although to differing degrees. Punishment, deterrence, isolation and rehabilitation are all generally accepted as legitimate goals of incarceration. In Texas, administrators voice the strongest support for isolating criminals as a means of insuring public safety and using jail as a deterrent to crime. A lesser degree of support is voiced for jails to punish offenders and provide rehabilitation. Rehabilitation receives its greatest support from managers representing larger jails. Unfortunately, these generalized goals are often contradictory and conflict inevitably arises when all purposes are pursued simultaneously.

## **Corrections Personnel Pay Scales**

*Texas county jail employees receive pay at a rate slightly less than the national average.* Workers in medium-size and large jails are paid at a substantially higher rate than workers in smaller jails. Further, personnel in the metropolitan areas are paid at a higher rate than those in rural areas. Differentials between lower paying and higher paying jail systems become greater for workers in supervisory and administrative positions. Decision-makers responsible for setting pay rates should closely examine the salary scale for corrections personnel.

## **Gender Issues in Staffing**

*Females comprise one third of the personnel employed in Texas jails.* This figure is somewhat misleading because women tend to be concentrated in select positions. Females are more likely to be employed in all job categories in smaller jails than in larger jails. This does not necessarily mean that smaller jails demonstrate a more progressive hiring practice than do larger jails. Since smaller jails also pay less than larger jails the argument may be made that women are more likely to hold lower paying jobs. Women are also more likely to be employed as corrections officers than peace officers or supervisors. It should be noted that these data do not suggest discrimination in hiring or promotion.. Since large numbers of women have been hired recently, many have not had the opportunity to advance to supervisory or peace officer positions through seniority so they may be expected to occupy fewer of these positions at the present time.

## **Ethnic Issues in Staffing**

*Whites, Hispanics and African Americans are employed in Texas jails in numbers roughly equivalent to their representation in the general population.* Although the distribution of staff by race on a state wide level shows a considerable total for each group, an analysis of jail staff by ethnic breakdown within regions of the state reflects concentrations of ethnic groups in certain geographic areas. This distribution reflects the ethnic make-up of the general population in the region. For example, Hispanics comprise about 15% of all jail personnel in the state. This cumulative total includes approximately 3% of all jail employees the East Texas region but approximately 65% of all jail employees the South Texas region. African Americans make up approximately 20% of all jail employees in the state but only 10% of the supervisors. Conversely, Whites make up approximately 63% of all jail employees but more than 75% of the supervisor positions. Hispanics comprise approximately 15% of all jail employees and 14% of the supervisors. It appears that African-Americans are underrepresented in supervisory ranks, that Whites are over represented and that Hispanics are represented relative to their overall proportion of jail staff.

## **Use of Volunteers**

*Most jail administrators report using some volunteers in their jail operations.* Generally, volunteers are used for religious programs, inmate education or drug and alcohol abuse programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. Volunteers usually perform non-essential tasks in the jails. Most sheriffs do not use reserve deputy sheriffs for jail duty. Only 16% report using sheriff's reserves.

## **Food Service and Commissary**

*Jail managers report high levels of satisfaction with these two crucial areas of jail operations.* Almost all jails prepare meals on site and serve inmates in a "day room" setting near the living quarters rather than a "mess hall" arrangement. Most jails provide commissaries that range in products from vending machine goods to a full line of toiletries and personal items. Commissaries employ a variety of delivery modes and billing systems. In recent years, private firms have begun offering both food service and commissary service to local jails for a profit. A number of agencies now use private operators but a majority of Texas jails still maintain kitchens and commissaries internally through the sheriff's staff. Those that do use private vendors report high levels of satisfaction with the service provided. Others who use more traditional approaches report equally high levels of satisfaction with their service. No single food service or commissary system seems superior to others. Administrators rate both commissary and food service as highly important jail operations.

## **Inmate Health Care**

*High medical costs represent the greatest single issue of concern for Texas jail administrators.* Most jails transport inmates in need of medical care to a local hospital or clinic for basic triage, diagnosis and treatment. Some jails contract with doctors and nurses to make regular rounds in the jail and a few of the larger jails maintain on site professional medical staffs. Only three jails report a physician available around the clock for jail inmates. The type of administrative structure used to deliver medical service is, to a great extent, a function of jail size. Health care is provided by one of three basic approaches; the sheriff's department hires health care professionals and assigns them to the jail; services are contracted through a private firm; or another agency such as the local hospital district provides health care services. Managers rate inmate medical care as one of the most important jail functions. Most administrators express some degree of satisfaction with their inmate health care system but a sizable minority expresses concerns. Medical services for non-emergencies vary greatly from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

## **Mental Health Issues**

*Mental health represents one of the most troubling areas of jail administration.* Only 11% of the Texas jails covered by the survey report any mental health professionals assigned to the jail. Only 5% of the jails report an extensive mental health staff including psychiatrists or psychologists assigned to the jail. Mental health professionals assist in screening those inmates suspected of mental health deficiencies in approximately 10% of the jails in Texas. Almost 90% of the jails in Texas have no mental health professionals involved in inmate screening. Almost all Texas jails coordinate with the local office of the state Mental Health Mental Retardation Authority (MHMRA) to provide mental health services. A substantial minority of administrators rate efforts to deliver mental health services as "fair" "poor" or "deplorable".

## **Substance Abuse Programming**

*Another area of concern is the lack of organized efforts to provide substance abuse treatment and counseling for jail inmates.* Only one third of the jails in Texas conduct any type of organized drug abuse program. Most of these consist of limited "AA" and "NA" volunteer meetings. Only three reporting jails participate in "drug courts" and only two have organized comprehensive "therapeutic community" approaches. *For the most part, organized drug abuse programming is non-existent.* Considering the large number of drug abusers incarcerated in county jails, this area seems to need substantial improvement.

## **Inmate Classification**

*Classification represents one of the strongest operational categories in Texas jails.* Almost all jails report a comprehensive objective classification program in place. Appropriate safeguards are maintained in most instances so that inmates are properly screened and assigned to proper living quarters. Most jail classification sections use an extensive list of qualifiers to determine an inmate's classification status. Classification also screens potential inmate workers for proper placement. Jail administrators report a high level of satisfaction with existing

classification efforts. The managers are commended for a job well done in one of the most crucial areas of jail administration.

### **Inmate Education**

*Extensive inmate education programming is particularly well suited to larger jails.* Like all rehabilitative efforts, education requires a solid base of eligible inmates to program comprehensive offerings. Many administrators express a desire to support education programs but lack the resources or the eligible inmates to develop viable approaches. Most jail education offerings are necessarily small literacy or GED courses that rely on volunteers for instructors. The largest jails do offer comprehensive education programs but they are limited to a few jurisdictions. Vocational offerings are only possible in the largest of jails. Most administrators with education programs rate them highly.

### **Inmate Services**

*An array of inmate services including library, religious programs, laundry, telephone service, visitation and recreation are well-structured and effective.* Managers explained these programs in detail. Although some disagreed on precise plans for implementation and the various logistic required, jail administrators expressed a positive commitment to maintain quality inmate services. With few exceptions in most categories, he administrators evaluated their efforts at some level of satisfaction. Further they expressed the opinion that these services, mundane as they might appear on the surface, are viable and important components of the jail system.

### **Computer Systems for Inmate Management**

*Most jails report some form of computerized inmate information system in operation but an alarming number of managers report levels of dissatisfaction with their systems.* Jail administrators and their staffs must adapt to the computer age. Even though smaller organizations may not have the same informational needs as larger jails, all jail systems are a component of a larger justice information network. It is necessary that systems interface among themselves to accomplish full network efficiency and information reporting. Specialists may be employed or contracted to help local administrators tailor computer systems for their specific needs.

### **Security and Emergency Issues**

*Texas jails provide a remarkably safe environment for staff and inmates alike.* Managers rate security concerns as their highest priority. Incidents of escape, assault and suicide are extremely low in Texas jails. Jail personnel are especially sensitive to security issues and establish policy and procedures to enhance system security. Serious emergencies rarely occur in Texas jails but when they do, staffs respond appropriately and properly. Administrators disagree

on the usefulness of military style emergency response teams but those that employ them express high levels of satisfaction with their performance.

### **Staff Morale and Working Conditions**

*According to jail managers, corrections staffs maintain reasonably high levels of morale and working conditions are acceptable.* The fact that jails can maintain a relatively high staff morale and pleasant working conditions seems to contradict the basic premise of those scholars discussed in the first section of this report. Since jails are negative in many respects, one would expect morale and evaluations of working conditions to reflect such negativity. In fact, this study reports the opposite. Most managers note a rather positive level of staff morale. This must reflect a positive attitude by the personnel assigned to Texas jails.

### **Administrative Issues**

*Jail managers rated the areas of greatest concern to them as medical costs, budget restraints, and staff training.* This varies from the 1990 survey that listed overcrowding as the area of most concern. Since the "prison crisis" of the late 1980's and early 1990's has now passed, administrators show only moderate concern for overcrowding. Readers are reminded to remember how quickly jail overcrowding can grip the jail system. Medical concerns, especially those of costs, represent a serious set of issues for the entire society. Budget restraints represent a perpetual area of concern. The same topic was also rated as second in 1990. Staff training represents the third issue of concern.

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