

**COMMISSION ON ENHANCING AGENCY OUTCOMES
SUMMARY SHEET**

Corrections and Community-Based Services

The Department of Correction (DOC) operates a unified system of jails and prisons for both convicted offenders and pre-trial defendants not out on bail. The budget for DOC is 4 percent of the state budget at \$674,072,560 in FY 11. For several years now, there has been a growing realization on the part of many nationally and in Connecticut that incarceration might not be the best response to all criminal acts in terms of public safety, a primary goal of corrections. Further, almost every incarcerated offender will be released, even if the offender's entire sentence is served. The alternatives to incarceration, or re-entry programs for those who were incarcerated, which are intertwined with probation and parole, are community-based services that generally cost less than prison. The issue of when and how to release offenders, and which ones, into the community is, of course, an area in which views can be sharply divided.

As of 11/1/10, 18,320 people were incarcerated in DOC facilities, and 4,789 were in the community under DOC control. At the same time, 52,103 individuals were on probation, under the jurisdiction of the Judicial Branch.¹

One impetus to develop different ways of handling criminals is the recidivism rate. According to a 2010 recidivism report by the Criminal Justice Planning Division, within three years of their release or discharge:

- 67.5 rearrested
- 53.7 convicted of new criminal offense
- 56.5 returned to prison with new charges, for either technical violations or to begin a new prison sentence
- 36.6% were reincarcerated to serve a new prison sentence

The recent October 2010 report by the Connecticut Regional Institute for the 21st Century entitled *Assessment of Connecticut's Correction, Parole, and Probation Systems* reports that "according to recent calculations, the average daily expenditure per inmate in Connecticut in 2008 through 2009 was \$92.35."² In contrast, the report notes the average daily expenditure per client on probation (in the community) was \$10.24.³ The report states "[c]learly, a policy that appropriately reduces prison population through judicious use of parole, probation and community based transitional services will save money."⁴

¹ Monthly Indicators Report, Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division (November 2010)

² Framework for Connecticut's Fiscal Future Part 2: Assessment of Connecticut's Correction, Parole and Probation Systems, A Report of the Connecticut Regional Institute for the 21st Century Summary of Report Findings, p.2.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. The report recommends: Establish a steering mechanism including a system to measure performance, and a comprehensive information system across the entire criminal justice system; engage the Connecticut business community in the process of reform and re-entry; renegotiate union contracts; review, analyze and standardize the risk assessment instruments to be utilized across the Correction, Parole and Probation systems; establish a faith-based pilot initiative within the incarcerated male population; institute the use of meritorious good-time for certain offenders; provide sufficient funding for re-entry programs, and measure results and cost-effectiveness; extend the early release furlough program for appropriate inmates; and continue to build and enhance partnerships and collaborations with community based service providers.

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In 2004, Connecticut was experiencing a prison overcrowding problem. Public Act 04-234, An Act Concerning Prison Overcrowding, was passed, which called for collaboration among the many agencies⁵ involved in criminal justice to develop and implement an offender re-entry strategy as a new approach to addressing the prison overcrowding problem. No one agency was designated the lead, but in 2005 the OPM Division of Criminal Justice Planning was established and since 2006 has been responsible for developing and implementing the offender re-entry strategy. The original 2004 public act contained specific measures of success by which to assess the re-entry strategy, which the division must report on every year.

In its most recent report of May 2010, the division noted that “the decline in the State’s prison population, during the last year in particular, reflected a series of smaller, incremental factors coming into alignment [including]:

- A gradual increase in the number of offenders released into community supervision programs;
- A steady reduction of the offender backlog (that began in 2007) through discharges and releases in community programs;
- Fewer than anticipated monthly admittances of un-sentenced offenders, particularly during the summer and fall;
- Increased efficiency in pre-trial diversion programs;
- Optimized population management;
- Greater accountability and improved operational efficiency;
- And expanded collaboration between various criminal justice agencies including the Board of Pardons and Paroles, CSSD, and DOC.”

The division also acknowledged in its May 2010 report the need to “develop an action and implementation plan from the strategy with assignments and timelines overseen by the Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Committee.” It would seem that such a plan was envisioned back in 2004 when the requirement for implementing and developing a “strategy” with measures to report on was put in place. Nonetheless, such a plan is key to purposefully moving forward with optimizing practices that enhance public safety, and can reduce costs.

Recommendation: *Encourage CJPAC to make it a priority to complete an action and implementation plan as soon as possible for offender re-entry, and include prospective costs savings.*

If fewer offenders were incarcerated allowing prisons to close, currently, overtime costs could be reduced, while other strategies such as managed attrition could be explored. CEAO staff looked at overtime expenses before and after DOC closed Webster CI in January 2010, which as of July 1 2009, had 356 offenders and 128 staff. In January 2009 for one two-week pay period, OT expenses were \$2 million; for a two-week pay period in January 2010, OT expenses were lower at 1.76 million, suggesting an impact from the closure.

⁵ The agencies specifically included as collaborators in P.A. 04-234 were: the Departments of Correction, Labor, Mental Health and Addiction Services, and Social Services, the Board of Pardons and Paroles, and the Judicial Branch’s Court Support Services Division.

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The table below shows how many offenders and pre-trial defendants were in the various state correctional institutions on average during the third quarter of 2010. Also shown are the average number of beds at each facility, allowing an inmate population density figure to be calculated per institution, a measure of capacity. A number of institutions are currently at or over capacity, while some are not. On average, not including Manson Youth and York due to their distinct populations, there are 852 beds open. There are also an average of 417 persons at institutions that are over capacity, for a “net open” of 435.

Recommendation: While the particular characteristics of the facilities (e.g., dorm versus cell) and the risk levels of inmates of course would need to be considered when thinking about closing any facility, **given that open bed average of 852 (with a smaller “net open” of 435), DOC should review whether another prison or part of a prison could be closed.**

Quarterly Legislative Population Information 7/1/10-9/30/10 DOC			
Facility	Avg. Inmate Population	Avg. Number of Beds per facility	Inmate Population Density Per Facility (Avg. beds open)
Bergin	1000	962	103.95%
Bridgeport	987	1040	94.90% (53)
Brooklyn	456	456	100%
Cheshire	1477	1456	101.44%
Corrigan-Radgowski	1557	1489	104.57%
CRCI	1477	1549	95.35% (72)
Enfield	725	724	100.14%
Garner	633	748	84.63% (115)
Gates	875	1139	76.82% (264)
Hartford	1181	984	120.02%
MacDougall/Walker	2123	2131	99.62%
Manson Youth Institute	615	719	85.54%
New Haven	806	767	105.08%
Northern	365	586	62.29% (221)
Osborn	1967	2094	93.94% (127)
Webster	0	584	0.00%
Willard-Cybulski	1158	1104	104.89%
York	1109	1553	71.41%
TOTAL	18,511	20,085	92.16% (852)
Source of Data: DOC PA 09-39 Report for FY11 Q1 (7/1/10-9/30/10)			