

Review of the Department of Corrections

Report No. 00-23 December 2000

Revised April 2001

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*Office of Program Policy Analysis
and Government Accountability*

an office of the Florida Legislature

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Project supervised by Byron Brown (850/487-9215) and Kathy McGuire (850/487-9224)

Project conducted by Lee Cobb, Louise Cobbe, Richard Dolan, Anna Estes,

Sabrina Hartley, Bernadette Howard, and Linda Vaughn

John W. Turcotte, OPPAGA Director



The Florida Legislature

OFFICE OF PROGRAM POLICY ANALYSIS AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY



John W. Turcotte, Director

December 2000
Revised April 2001

The President of the Senate,
the Speaker of the House of Representatives,
and the Joint Legislative Auditing Committee

I have directed that a review be made of the Department of Corrections. The results of this review are presented to you in this report. This evaluation was made as a part of a series of justification reviews to be conducted by OPPAGA under the Government Performance and Accountability Act of 1994. This review was conducted by Lee Cobb, Louise Cobbe, Richard Dolan, Anna Estes, Sabrina Hartley, Bernadette Howard, and Linda Vaughn under the supervision of Byron Brown and Kathy McGuire.

We wish to express our appreciation to the staff of the Florida Department of Corrections for their assistance.

Sincerely,

John W. Turcotte
Director

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Executive Summary

Review of the Department of Corrections

This report presents our review of the Department of Corrections' reorganization efforts and our Program Evaluation and Justification Review of the department.

Reorganization should improve operations, but efforts are needed to improve staff morale

Reorganization. The department has made progress towards the Secretary's reorganization goals, which include standardizing and centralizing operations and decision making, increasing efficiencies, reducing costs, and re-focusing on security. However, the department did not use good management practices to effectively lead employees through reorganization, and poor planning and communication with employees and other stakeholders hampered the process of change. As a result, reorganization initiatives were not as successful as they potentially could have been, and the effects on department employees were more severe than necessary. Over time, the reorganization should produce increased efficiency and effectiveness. However, efforts are needed to improve employee morale.

Department activities are grouped into four programs

The department has grouped its activities into four major programs: Security and Institutional Operations, Education and Programs, Health Services, and Community Corrections. Together, these programs protect the public by supervising offenders and rehabilitating them through work and programs.

Escapes are down, but batteries are up

Security and Institutional Operations. Department efforts have lowered the number of inmate escapes, but the number of batteries by inmates on other inmates and department employees is increasing. This increase may be related to the fact that inmates are serving longer sentences, and their ability to earn time off for good behavior has been reduced, thereby decreasing the incentive to stay out of trouble. Inmate idleness is also a contributing factor to violence.

Inmate idleness remains a problem

The department does not have enough work and program assignments for inmates, creating an idleness rate of 18.8%. The potential for significant expansion of prison work is limited, although vocation, education, and substance abuse programs could be expanded to reduce idleness. We recommend that the department provide the Legislature information about the need to enhance programming and the additional funding that would be required. We also recommend that the Legislature authorize the department to spend up to 1% of the inmate canteen profits at each prison to purchase recreational equipment for restructured activities for inmates who have completed their work or program assignment for the day.

Executive Summary

Requirements for correctional officers should be revised

The department has had a long-term problem hiring and retaining security staff, who are required by law to be certified law enforcement officers. The department hires untrained officers and trains them at state expense, but many leave within a year. The department is authorized to seek reimbursement for training expenses from employees who leave on their own initiative within 12 months of being hired. Of the 104 new hires that chose to leave in Fiscal Year 1999-2000, only 18 partially reimbursed the state for training. Since the department spent approximately \$99,467 on tuition for training these 104 officers and recovered \$9,158, the state lost over \$90,000 in training expenses, in addition to losing trained officers who had been paid \$881,145 in salaries while they were in training. The department proposes reducing the number of required curriculum hours and supplementing them with on-the-job training to produce officers trained specifically for prison work at less cost. We recommend that the Legislature amend Ch. 943, *Florida Statutes*, to implement these revisions. We further recommend that the department collect training costs for officers that leave within 12 months of being hired, as directed by law.

Better control is needed over small construction projects

Keeping prison costs low depends on cost-effective operations. At \$52.26, Florida's inmate per diem costs rank below the national average of \$56.46. However, the department has begun over 300 small construction projects that have tied up \$129 million in state funds but are languishing. If the department cannot adequately manage this type of project, we recommend that capital construction projects costing over \$100,000 be required to go through the Department of Management Services for review, approval, and monitoring.

Better fleet management is needed

Through better management of its vehicle fleet, the department can save \$586,962 annually through contracts for parts and obtain \$150,000 for unused vehicles. Also, the agency is reimbursing mileage to probation employees that drive cars extensively and could save \$31,257 annually by assigning them state vehicles.

Programs promote public safety

Education and Programs. Participation in educational, vocational, substance abuse treatment, and other programs reduces inmate idleness and promotes institutional security. Inmates who complete programs have a lower rate of disciplinary reports, increased post-release success in the labor market, and reduced recidivism.

Many inmates do not receive the programs they need

However, many inmates leave prison without addressing their skill deficits and treatment needs. Part of the department's challenge is assigning inmates to facilities that match their custody level and offer the appropriate program; the new Program Priority Ranking system should help this process. In addition, thousands of inmates that do participate in programs, fail to attain their educational or treatment goals due to transfers. Transfers to meet institutional and security priorities necessarily take precedence over inmates' program needs; however,

when decisions are made to move inmates for less essential reasons, program completion should be taken into account.

Most inmates get little preparation for rejoining society

As directed by law, the department provides transition assistance to help inmates re-enter the community. However, 84% of inmates received only a two-hour video on re-entry issues; 16% received a 100-hour comprehensive course on job readiness and life management skills. The cost of expanding the 100-hour transition program to serve inmates at 14 additional institutions would amount to approximately \$0.5 million. This amount could possibly be recovered by the potential cost avoidance resulting from reduced recidivism for program completers.

Health care is adequate and costs appear reasonable

Health Services. The Correctional Medical Authority, an independent review board, has found the department's provision of health services to be adequate. A comparison of Florida's reported inmate suicide rate to nationally reported rates shows the department's rate is among the lowest. Also, the percentage of inmate health care grievances that are upheld is very low, indicating that policies and procedures are meeting inmate needs. On the basis of per capita cost trends, it appears that the department is providing health services at a reasonable cost to the state.

To further reduce health care costs, the department is consolidating inmates by medical need and privatizing health services in one entire region of the state. Also, the department has issued a Request for Proposals to privatize health services in South Florida and anticipates executing a contract by January 23, 2001. We recommend that the department collect data during each of the next five years to allow the Legislature to compare the cost and effectiveness of the department and a private vendor to determine whether to further privatize health services.

The use of electronic monitoring for offenders on house arrest is an effective tool

Community Corrections. Department data demonstrate that offenders monitored by global positioning satellite re-offend less frequently compared to those monitored by radio frequency or to offenders with no electronic monitoring.

Responsibility for court-ordered payments should be transferred to the Department of Revenue

The Court-Ordered Payment System, which is used to collect and disburse victim restitution and other payments, has been plagued with problems ranging from lack of internal controls to failure to earn interest on monthly cash balance that exceeds \$8 million. In addition, at a cost of \$36 million a year, probation officers are spending an estimated one out of five workdays trying to reconcile problems with the system. We recommend that the collection and disbursement of offender monies be transferred to the Department of Revenue, which is experienced in overseeing financial matters.

Civilians could perform court officer functions at less cost

Probation intake officers' courtroom duties could be assumed by civilians. Also, although the court officers incur none of the risks assumed by probation officers, they are on the special risk pension system. Replacing

officers in court with civilians would generate annual savings of \$340,069 in special risk pension benefits.

The department needs a strategy to catch absconders

In Fiscal Year 1999-2000, over 15,000 of the offenders sentenced to probation absconded. To enhance public safety and stop increasing number of offenders from fleeing supervision, the department needs to place priority on finding absconders who pose the greatest threat to public safety. We further recommend that probation officers partner with local law enforcement agencies to apprehend absconders and that the department complete its efforts to post absconders' pictures on its website.

Recommendations

Department Area	OPPAGA Recommendations
Reorganization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Secretary should increase communication with employees, the Legislature, and other stakeholders and embrace constructive criticism to facilitate future change and realize the full potential of the reorganization effort. (p.19)
Management Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The agency should enhance the facility planning process to include all key program areas. (p.22) ✓ The Legislature should not appropriate the agency funds for additional vehicle purchases (with the exception of purchasing vehicles for those employees driving more than 13,750 miles a year) until the department improves its fleet management. Through better management, the agency can save \$586,962 annually through contracts for parts and obtain \$150,000 for unused vehicles. (p.24)
Security Operations Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Amend Ch. 944, <i>Florida Statutes</i>, to authorize the department to spend up to 1% of the inmate canteen profits at each prison for the purchase of recreational equipment for structured activities for inmates that have fulfilled their daily work and program requirements. (p.32)
The Legislature should	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Amend Ch. 943, <i>Florida Statutes</i>, to implement the department's proposed revisions for correctional officer certification. (p.34) ✓ Require any capital construction project costing over a certain threshold, for example \$100,000, to be submitted to the Department of Management Services for review, approval, and monitoring until project completion, if the department's efforts to complete construction projects on a timely schedule are not successful. (p.37)
The department should	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Collect training costs for officers that leave within 12 months of being hired, as directed by law. (p.34) ✓ Identify viable sites using four key considerations and use the new prototype prison to achieve cost-effective construction. (p.36)
Education and Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Revise Ch. 944, <i>Florida Statutes</i>, to eliminate any ambiguity concerning the department's authority to mandate participation in substance abuse programs. (p.50)
The Legislature should	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Revise Ch. 944, <i>Florida Statutes</i>, if it concurs with the department's plan to make participation in education programs mandatory. (p.50) ✓ Consider increasing funding for the 100-hour transition skills course to increase the amount of cost avoidance. (p.57)
The department should	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide the Legislature options for increasing levels of programming for education, vocation, or substance abuse, including associated costs and potential benefits. (p.51) ✓ Take three steps to ensure a higher rate of program completion and more efficient use of program resources: (p.53) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ monitor the impact of routine transfers and end-of-sentence releases on program completion; ▪ modify databases to flag inmates about to be scheduled for routine transfer who are in a program nearing completion so that staff can determine if the transfer should be delayed; and ▪ provide a mechanism for program employees to participate more directly and proactively in decisions to transfer inmates who are in programs.

Department Area		OPPAGA Recommendations
Health Services Program		✓ Continue to consolidate inmates by health care needs to reduce operational costs. (p.68)
		✓ Collect information throughout the next five years to allow the Legislature to make a valid comparison of the cost and effectiveness of the department and the private vendor. (p.70)
	The department should	✓ Assess the effectiveness of establishing or relocating crisis stabilization beds statewide, with particular attention to Region I. (p.73)
Community Corrections Program		✓ The Legislature should amend Ch. 775, <i>Florida Statutes</i> , to transfer the collection and disbursement of offender monies from the Department of Corrections to the Department of Revenue. (p.85)
	The department should	✓ To save the state \$340,069 in special risk benefits annually, reclassify the court intake officer position to one of civilian status. (p.87)
		✓ To save the state \$187,542 and a rate of return of 12% over the vehicles' useful lives, request the Legislature to fund the purchase of vehicles for those employees driving more than 13,750 miles a year. (p.88)
		✓ Place priority on finding absconders that pose the greatest threat to public safety, partner with local law enforcement agencies to apprehend absconders, and complete efforts to post absconders' pictures on the department's website. (p.89-91)

Agency Response

The Secretary of the Department of Corrections provided a written response to our preliminary and tentative findings and recommendations. (See Appendix B, page 96, for his response.)

Introduction

Purpose

This report presents the results of our review of the Department of Corrections reorganization efforts and our Program Evaluation and Justification Review of the department's four major programs. Because the issues related to reorganization and the justification review overlap, we have issued our findings in this single report.

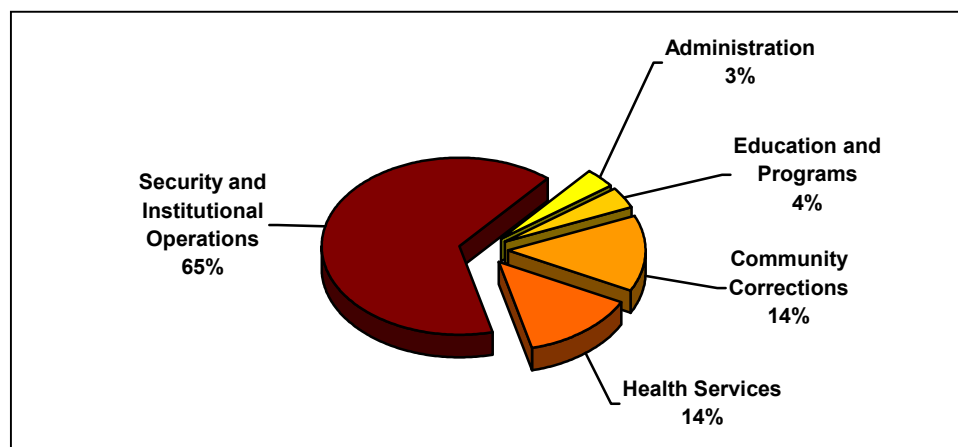
Background

The Department of Corrections' mission is to protect the public in two ways: incarcerating and supervising offenders and rehabilitating offenders through work, programs, and services. In Florida, the department is responsible for all prisoners sentenced to terms of incarceration of one year or more. As of June 30, 2000, Florida's prison population was 71,233 inmates, that are housed in 57 prisons and 71 other facilities spread throughout the state. (See Appendix A.)

The department also provides community supervision of offenders sentenced by the court to a term of probation or community control, and of former prisoners who have been released from prison through parole or some other form of early release. As of June 30, 2000, the department was supervising 149,469 offenders in the community.

In Fiscal Year 2000-01, the Legislature appropriated over \$1,680.6 million and 27,669 full-time equivalent positions to the Department of Corrections. (See Exhibits 1 and 2.)

Exhibit 1
Almost Two-Thirds of the Operating Budget Is Allocated to Security and Operations



Source: General Appropriations Act Fiscal Year 2000-01.

Exhibit 2
The Legislature Appropriated \$1,680.6 Million for Fiscal Year 2000-01

Appropriation	Fiscal Year (in millions)		
	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
General Revenue			
Operating Budget	\$1,544.5	\$1,546.6	\$1,543.2
Fixed Capital Outlay	38.0	20.5	19.2
Trust Funds			
Operating Budget	101.9	107.8	113.5
Fixed Capital Outlay	40.5	6.2	4.7
Total	\$1,724.9	\$1,681.1	\$1,680.6

Source: House Appropriations Committee.

Reorganization began in 1999

Governor Jeb Bush appointed Michael Moore as Secretary of the Department of Corrections in January 1999. In its 1999 session, the Legislature authorized the Secretary to reorganize the department, with the stipulation that the reorganization not adversely affect department employees, insofar as was possible. The Secretary began to reorganize the department in the spring of 1999 and completed the major components by June 2000. The Legislature also directed the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability to conduct a performance review of the department's reorganization efforts.¹ Last December we issued an [interim report](#) on the progress of reorganization

¹ Chapter 99-271, *Laws of Florida*.

for the 2000 legislative session.² In this final report we describe the methods and goals of the department's reorganization efforts and discuss the immediate and long-term effects of these efforts on department personnel, operational effectiveness and accountability.

In 2000, the department's budget was reduced

In its 2000 session, the Legislature reduced the Department of Corrections' 2000-01 fiscal year appropriation for employees; subsequently, the department has cut over 1,000 positions.³ This reduction in force was a separate event from the department's reorganization, but it required the department to implement additional changes to its organizational structure. When appropriate, we have noted how this reduction in force has affected or will affect issues and concerns related to reorganization and program performance.

Justification reviews assess efficiency and effectiveness

State law directs OPPAGA to conduct justification reviews of each program during its second year of operating under a performance-based program budget.⁴ This comprehensive review is intended by the Legislature to assess the efficiency, effectiveness, and long-term implications of current or alternative state policies, and to provide recommendations for the improvement of state government. The Department of Corrections began operating under performance-based program budgeting during the 1998-99 fiscal year, prior to the appointment of the new secretary and the ensuing reorganization.

The department has grouped its activities into four major programs in the budget: Security and Institutional Operations, Education and Programs, Health Services, and Community Corrections.⁵ The purposes of these four programs as configured for Fiscal Year 2000-01 are described in Exhibit 3.

² *Interim Status Report: Department of Corrections Reorganization*, [Report No. 99-17](#), December 1999.

³ The Legislature based the cut in appropriations on the number of vacant positions within the department.

⁴ Chapter 94-249, *Laws of Florida*.

⁵ Security and Operations was known as Custody and Control in the 1998-99 and 1999-2000 General Appropriations Act. Education and Programs was called Education and Job Training in the 1998-99 General Appropriations Act and Offender Work and Training in 1999-2000. Despite the name changes, the programs still comprise most of the same activities included in the prior years.

Exhibit 3 Programs Comprise Key Clusters of Department Activities

Program	Purpose
Security and Institutional Operations	Provide day-to-day operations such as food service, work programs, and inmate management; and maintain security through correctional officers and security enhancements.
Education and Programs	Provide a range of programs to promote inmates' institutional adjustment and facilitate their return to society as productive, law-abiding citizens.
Health Services	As directed by the federal courts, provide required medical, dental, and mental health services during incarceration.
Community Corrections	Ensure that offenders sentenced to specific requirements while living in the community comply with Florida laws and their court orders.

Source: Department of Corrections.

All four programs provide essential services to the state of Florida.

- ***The Security and Institutional Operations Program*** is necessary for the state to maintain public safety by incarcerating offenders in institutions and preventing escapes.
- ***Education and Programs*** are essential to reduce inmate idleness and enhance public safety by preventing recidivism. It is conceivable that the prison system could be operated without programs such as education, vocational training, and substance abuse treatment, but there is substantial evidence in the literature that these activities have a positive effect on offenders' institutional adjustment and successful reintegration into the community.
- ***The Health Services Program*** provides required medical diagnosis and treatment to incarcerated offenders as required by the federal courts; inmates are not free to seek medical care from providers of their choice.
- ***The Community Corrections Program*** is necessary to ensure that offenders that have been sentenced to community supervision comply with the conditions imposed by the court. Department probation officers ensure consistent supervision throughout the state and reduce the overall costs of the prison system because community supervision is significantly cheaper than incarceration.

These activities belong in the Department of Corrections

The Department of Corrections is the most appropriate state agency to provide these activities, with one significant exception. We recommend in Chapter 7 that the Legislature transfer responsibility for the Court Ordered Payment System to the Department of Revenue, whose mission is the collection and disbursement of state funds. In the course of our review, we also explored whether responsibility for community supervision and correctional education could be transferred to local government. Local governments currently supervise misdemeanor offenders placed on

probation, and local school districts provide educational services in juvenile justice facilities. However, we concluded that these options were not viable. Transferring either program would result in fragmentation, and supervision of felons requires a substantial level of correctional expertise. Also, as noted in a previous report, local provision of juvenile justice education has proved problematic.⁶

We also assessed whether department activities could be privatized. The Legislature has privatized five prisons and directed OPPAGA to review each private prison's performance to assess whether these facilities have realized their potential for cost savings.⁷ While the results have been mixed, private prisons have made a significant contribution to the state prison system by creating competition that has encouraged the department to seek new ways to operate and to contain costs. However, decisions to privatize future prisons should be based on an improved methodology for establishing the annual per diem rates to ensure that the private prisons provide a cost savings each year of the contract.⁸

*The department has
privatized many
activities*

The department has privatized many of its institutional operations and program functions, and it is in the process of privatizing additional services and operations. Substance abuse treatment, both in the prisons and for community supervision, has been contracted to private vendors, as have food service and health services in some prisons. In Chapter 6, we discuss how the department is following our recommendation to privatize health care for inmates in one entire region of the state; the Legislature will be able to use information from this effort to determine whether to expand health service privatization. In Chapter 7, we recommend that the Department of Revenue assume responsibility for the collection and disbursement of court-ordered payments and contract with a private vendor for banking services. The department privatizes some aspects of felony supervision, such as some of the technical aspects of electronic monitoring. While some local governments hire private vendors such as the Salvation Army to supervise misdemeanants, we found no support for privatizing the supervision of felons from the two state attorneys that we interviewed.

⁶ *Review of Education Services in Juvenile Justice Residential Facilities*, [Report No. 98-28](#), December 1998.

⁷ *Private Prison Review: South Bay Correctional Facility Provides Savings and Success; Room for Improvement*, [Report No. 99-39](#), March 2000; *Private Prison Review: Lake City Correctional Facility Experienced Start-Up Problems, But It Has Improved*, [Report No. 99-33](#), February 2000; *Review of Bay Correctional Facility and Moore Haven Correctional Facility*, [Report No. 97-68](#), April 1998; and *Follow-up Report on Gadsden Correctional Institution*, [Report No. 97-56](#), March 1998.

⁸ In *South Bay Correctional Facility Provides Savings and Success; Room for Improvement*, [Report No. 99-39](#) we recommend that the department work with the Correctional Privatization Commission to set up a method for indexing correctional costs each year, with the private prison per diem rate then set at 7% below the public prison cost.

Introduction

The four programs that constitute the state corrections system are integrally and inextricably related. Therefore, in addition to discussing reorganization and the performance of each of the four programs, we have included a chapter addressing issues that cut across all the programs. Our report is presented in seven chapters.

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Department Reorganization
- Chapter 3: Overarching Management Issues
- Chapter 4: Security and Institutional Operations
- Chapter 5: Education and Programs
- Chapter 6: Health Services
- Chapter 7: Community Corrections

Our recommendations for improving department operations are summarized on page 7. The department's response to our findings and recommendations is included in Appendix B.

OPPAGA Review of the Department of Corrections (Report No. 00-23)

Department Area		OPPAGA Recommendations
Reorganization	✓	The Secretary should increase communication with employees, the Legislature, and other stakeholders and embrace constructive criticism to facilitate future change and realize the full potential of the reorganization effort. (p.19)
Management Issues	✓	The agency should enhance the facility planning process to include all key program areas. (p.22)
	✓	The Legislature should not appropriate the agency funds for additional vehicle purchases (with the exception of purchasing vehicles for those employees driving more than 13,750 miles a year) until the department improves its fleet management. Through better management, the agency can save \$586,962 annually through contracts for parts and obtain \$150,000 for unused vehicles. (p.24)
Security Operations Program	✓	Amend Ch. 944, <i>Florida Statutes</i> , to authorize the department to spend up to 1% of the inmate canteen profits at each prison for the purchase of recreational equipment for structured activities for inmates that have fulfilled their daily work and program requirements. (p.32)
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The department should	✓	Collect training costs for officers that leave within 12 months of being hired, as directed by law. (p.34)
	✓	Identify viable sites using four key considerations and use the new prototype prison to achieve cost-effective construction. (p.36)
Education and Programs	✓	Revise Ch. 944, <i>Florida Statutes</i> , to eliminate any ambiguity concerning the department's authority to mandate participation in substance abuse programs. (p.50)
The Legislature should	✓	Revise Ch. 944, <i>Florida Statutes</i> , if it concurs with the department's plan to make participation in education programs mandatory. (p.50)
	✓	Consider increasing funding for the 100-hour transition skills course to increase the amount of cost avoidance. (p.57)
The department should	✓	Provide the Legislature options for increasing levels of programming for education, vocation, or substance abuse, including associated costs and potential benefits. (p.51)
	✓	Take three steps to ensure a higher rate of program completion and more efficient use of program resources: (p.54) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ monitor the impact of routine transfers and end-of-sentence releases on program completion; ▪ modify databases to flag inmates about to be scheduled for routine transfer who are in a program nearing completion so that staff can determine if the transfer should be delayed; and ▪ provide a mechanism for program employees to participate more directly and proactively in decisions to transfer inmates who are in programs.
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	✓	Collect information throughout the next five years to allow the Legislature to make a valid comparison of the cost and effectiveness of the department and the private vendor. (p.70)
The department should	✓	Assess the effectiveness of establishing or relocating crisis stabilization beds statewide, with particular attention to Region I. (p.73)
Community Corrections Program	✓	The Legislature should amend Ch. 775, <i>Florida Statutes</i> , to transfer the collection and disbursement of offender monies from the Department of Corrections to the Department of Revenue. (p.85)
The department should	✓	To save the state \$340,069 in special risk benefits annually, reclassify the court intake officer position to one of civilian status. (p.87)
	✓	To save the state \$187,542 and a rate of return of 12% over the vehicles' useful lives, request the Legislature to fund the purchase of vehicles for those employees driving more than 13,750 miles a year. (p.88)
	✓	Place priority on finding absconders that pose the greatest threat to public safety, partner with local law enforcement agencies to apprehend absconders, and complete efforts to post absconders' pictures on the department's website. (p.89-91)

Reorganization Proves to Be a Painful Process

The Department of Corrections' reorganization has resulted in several significant operational improvements. To date the department has made progress towards the Secretary's goals, but expectations have not been fully realized in the short term. The department did not use recognized management practices to effectively lead employees through reorganization, and poor planning and poor communication with employees and other stakeholders hampered the process of change. In the long term, the reorganization should produce increased efficiency and effectiveness. However, efforts are needed to improve employee morale.

Reorganization goals were commendable

Secretary Moore articulated four goals for reorganizing the Department of Corrections:

- standardize and centralize operations and decision making;
- increase efficiencies;
- reduce costs; and
- re-focus institutional employees on the mission of security.

These goals represented major changes in department operations and addressed a number of the agency's shortcomings.

Prior to reorganization, the department was decentralized with decision-making authority placed primarily at institutions and regional offices. Although the central office promulgated policy, interpretation and implementation were left to the discretion of institutional and regional administrators. This autonomy led to inconsistent operations among facilities and created what some considered to be "institutional fiefdoms." Some examples of practices that differed from prison to prison included employee discipline, visitation policies, and items sold in the canteens. These operational variations sometimes created problems with employees, inmates, inmate families, and the Police Benevolence Association, the union that represents correctional officers in Florida.

Reorganization Proves to Be a Painful Process

Institutional autonomy led to many inefficiencies. For example, inmate banking was handled independently at each institution. When inmates were transferred from one prison to the next, their accounts had to be closed at one bank and opened at another. This policy required each institution to negotiate arrangements with a local bank and resulted in paperwork for both the sending and receiving institutions for every inmate transferred.

The old, decentralized organizational model also increased costs. With the exception of Region II, which practiced centralized warehousing, individual prisons across the state purchased and stored their own food, supplies, and materials. This practice made it difficult for facilities, and the system as a whole, to benefit from the savings that accrue from bulk purchasing.

Previously, wardens were responsible for all the operations within their prisons

Prior to reorganization, a warden's focus was split between the mission of security and the intricacies of daily prison operations. Wardens were responsible for all operations within their prisons, including security, personnel and business functions, inmate education and vocation programs, and food services. Each activity had its own workers and supervisor at each prison, all of whom reported to the warden.

To address these types of problems and achieve his goals, the Secretary undertook several initiatives.

- Decision making was elevated to the central office and all but security-related issues/duties were removed from under the command of prison wardens, so that wardens could focus all of their attention on prison security. This created a significant reduction in prison wardens' span of responsibility and control.
- Business and personnel functions formerly performed at each prison were centralized at a series of service centers, and the central office began exerting direct control and oversight. This change effectively shifted the organization from a decentralized to a centralized structure.
- Employee roles and functions and lines of authority were redefined for the central office, regions, service centers, and institutions. Hundreds of employees changed work locations to accommodate the new organizational structure.
- The specific missions of several prisons were redefined, necessitating the reassignment and transfer of hundreds of inmates.

The breadth of changes included within the reorganization effort touched every aspect of the department's operations and all levels of employees.

Progress toward reorganization goals

The department has made some progress toward its reorganization goals of standardization and centralization, increased efficiencies, reduced costs, and increased focus on security. However, reorganization has also created some adverse short-term effects on operations. Such effects can be expected as a part of any major reorganization effort; however, the department's failure to communicate and prepare led to more turmoil than necessary.

Goal 1: Increased standardization

To increase standardization, the department created regional service centers and centralized decision making that previously had been left to institutional discretion. Further standardization could have been achieved if employees assigned to new jobs had received more timely training.

The creation of service centers has started to increase standardization in many operational areas. By centralizing accounting and banking, personnel, computer services, maintenance and renovations, food service, training, and general services at regional service centers, the administration has reduced the variation that occurred when 52 different prisons each performed these functions.

Although the duties and responsibilities of the service centers were defined before they opened for business, the details as to how those operations would be conducted were not well planned and had to be developed by service center workers. For example, maintenance supervisors knew that they were allocated specific budgets for the facilities in their regions, but they were not provided guidance as to how to divide the budget among facilities or how to set up a corresponding accounting system. As a result, operations were not always the same from service center to service center, thereby limiting the degree of standardization achieved by the centers. We noted during our site visits that satisfaction with service center performance varied with location.

The service center structure has changed

In September 2000, the service center structure was revised due to a loss of positions resulting from actions taken during the 2000 legislative session. To meet the reduction, the department eliminated three of the seven service centers, thereby displacing 227 employees who were in positions to be deleted and 65 employees who were in positions that were transferred. The upheaval surrounding the reduction in service centers was compounded by an administrative decision to alter the chain of command for the remaining four centers. Whereas the service centers used to be under the authority of an on-site director with a supervisor for

each operational area, each service center operational area now reports directly to a central office bureau chief. As a result, there will be another phase-in period while service center and institution employees adapt to the new structure. The new chain of command should further increase standardization, although it also increases the potential for bottlenecks, as one administrator for each operational area now makes the final decisions pertaining to all 52 institutions.

Reorganization has centralized many types of decisions at the central office that were previously made in the field. Large issues, such as all types of contracting and employee discipline, and small issues, such as the types of candy sold in canteens, are all now decided at the central office level. For example, now that all disciplinary actions must be approved by the central office prior to implementation, an officer caught sleeping on the job at any institution faces the same consequences regardless of location.

The department also adopted a new promotion policy for correctional officers and correctional probation officers to try to make personnel decisions more objective. The new policy is based on a point scale that includes points for education, training, years of experience, and whether the applicant provides the correct answers to standard interview questions; however, it does not address previous job performance. As a result, some staff fear that the new policy could result in staff with mediocre-to-poor records receiving promotions over staff with excellent performance records, thereby bypassing the best-performing employees.

More training needed

During the start-up phase of reorganization, the department sometimes made the organizational transition prior to delivering training for the employees who were expected to perform new functions. In addition to the service center functions, this situation also occurred when new classification and mailroom employees were hired. Classification officers assess inmate security risk, while mailroom workers stop contraband from entering the prisons and ensure the proper handling of inmate mail. The satisfactory performance of these jobs is critical to the safety of the entire prison compound. Since so many employees were transitioning into new positions, often in circumstances where the person who had previously performed the function was no longer available, the department should have developed basic training classes to help employees quickly learn these new functions prior to assuming their duties.

Goal 2: Increased efficiencies

One of the key goals of reorganization was to increase the efficiency of department operations. By centralizing responsibilities and realigning the chains of command, the department has created a more streamlined organization that should increase efficiency statewide. Unfortunately, the department did not specify and quantify what efficiencies it sought to

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achieve. For example, administrators did not specify whether the purpose of the new centralized job application process was to reduce the time required to fill a vacancy, or to make it easier for applicants to apply, or both. When administrators do not identify their objectives, they cannot readily go back and see whether they have met their goals. To date, the department has not made an effort to quantify the extent to which its organizational changes have resulted in increased efficiencies.

Increased efficiency is expected, but there have been start-up problems

At the service centers, increased efficiencies are expected, for example, in the areas of purchasing, hiring, maintenance, and inmate banking. However, according to staff we interviewed during our reorganization and security review field visits to 12 institutions, the department experienced decreased efficiencies in most of these areas during the past year of start-up operations.

- Prison administrators reported that purchase requests had frequently been lost, denied, or reduced with minimal to no communication from service center employees.
- Some administrators complained of lost personnel paperwork, incorrect salary warrants, and lack of communication as to when new workers would begin. In one instance, several new correctional officers showed up at a prison to begin work, yet no one at the prison had been informed of their starting date, and no one was present to meet the new officers.
- Some administrators said that prison maintenance was a problem, as some maintenance needs were not being timely addressed, primarily due to lack of employees. The service center maintenance director now sets maintenance priorities that were previously under the control of the wardens.
- The timely deposit of inmate monies under the new centralized inmate banking process was identified as a problem. Monies from families must now be sent to the service center and can no longer be sent directly to the prison. Monies that were erroneously sent to the prison had to be forwarded to the service center for deposit, creating delays. According to both central office and prison administrators, this situation was aggravated because monies received by the service centers were not always quickly deposited.

These problems will likely be addressed as employees become acclimated to the new system. To enhance efficiency, increased communication among the central office, service centers, and the institutions is essential.

Goal 3: Reduced costs

One of the Secretary's goals was to reduce the department's operating costs. The Legislature achieved the Secretary's goal by reducing the department's budget. The department reported that it could reduce costs

by \$10 million over time through the creation of the service centers.⁹ This savings was expected to occur through attrition, as the 1999 Legislature directed the department to reorganize without terminating employees. For Fiscal Year 2000-01, the department offered to eliminate 287 full-time equivalent positions for a reduction of \$14.5 million. The Legislature eliminated these positions and an additional 1,208 positions that the department had frozen during reorganization.¹⁰ A per position cost of \$38,348 was used to determine the corresponding budget reduction of these positions. The department is now terminating employees to achieve the required \$46.3 million budget reduction.

The administration has not reported savings accrued through centralized purchasing or other reorganization cost-saving measures.

Goal 4: Re-focus on security

To increase the department's focus on security, wardens' jobs were redefined, the inmate classification process was restructured, and correctional officers were reassigned so that more officers would provide direct supervision of offenders.

As part of the reorganization, wardens' responsibilities were reduced to allow them to direct all their time and energy to security. During our site visits, wardens told us that they had not yet been able to spend more time on security matters. Instead, much of their day was spent trying to communicate with service center employees to try to sort out conflicting information, resolve problems, or secure needed goods and services. Support staff at the institutions previously handled these responsibilities.

Classification officers have moved to the field

Another initiative was to redesign the classification process to move 110 institutional classification officers to the field to serve as probation officers. This move, coupled with an increase in prison classification case loads, was intended to reduce probation caseloads and the overall costs of inmate classification.¹¹ Although the officers that conducted classification at the institutions were certified correctional probation officers, their job had been to assess inmate risk and assign inmates to housing, work, and programs. These officers were given the choice of moving to the field and receiving special risk retirement for supervising probationers, or remaining in the institution. The classification job was redefined so that the remaining officers prepare classification recommendations for Institutional Classification Team approval rather than making the

⁹ The department initially said that it could provide \$10 million in cost savings that would be returned to the Legislature. This was later changed to \$10 million in cost reductions, which would represent a reallocation within the department.

¹⁰ Frozen positions are those that the department held vacant in order to create flexibility in staff movement.

¹¹ Prison classification caseloads were increased from 150:1 to 225:1.

decision. Although there were delays in transferring the positions, the classification officers have now joined community corrections staff, thereby lowering probation officer caseloads.

However, the classification process at the institution does not appear to have reduced costs and increased efficiency as hoped. Instead of one officer determining an inmate's classification, the officer completes the same amount of work to prepare a recommendation for the Institutional Classification Team. The team, composed of the warden or assistant warden, the chief of prison security, and a classification supervisor, reviews and approves each recommendation, a process that can require more than a day a week for all three high-level administrators. During our field visits, employees said that attending these meetings detracted from other security-related duties and expressed frustration with the time required for three supervisors to perform work that had previously been performed by a single officer.

Security staff are doing civilian work

In another effort to increase the number of security officers on the compound, correctional officers that had been performing support functions such as the mailroom and clerical duties were transferred to posts involving the direct supervision of inmates. The support positions were to be assumed by civilian workers but could not be, at least in part due to budget cuts in the 2000 legislative session. Because most civilian workers were relocated when the service centers opened, correctional officers continue to be pulled from their posts to conduct essential support work at some institutions.

Officers in prison control rooms have assumed the support function of answering the main telephone switchboard. This additional duty detracts from the officers' security responsibilities, which include controlling prison ingress and egress, conducting security checks with officers on the compound, and responding to and routing calls for assistance. As a result of the loss of civilian positions, overall security could be negatively affected.

The process of change was not commendable

Broad-based change will inevitably encounter resistance within a large organization like the Department of Corrections. Resistance can act to undermine reorganization and lengthen the process, but this can be avoided through proactive management and communication. It is possible for reorganization to occur rapidly if, at a minimum, management

- makes the changes conceptually and operationally clear so that employees have a chance to see what they are supposed to do before they have to do it;
- schedules a period of start-up time; and

- makes an effort to gain the acceptance of implementers.¹²

However, our review of the Department of Corrections found that it pursued rapid and comprehensive agency reorganization without adhering to these key management principles. As a result, the reorganization initiatives were not as successful as they potentially could have been, and the adverse effects on department employees were more severe than necessary.

Reorganization vision and scope were not clear

While consensus existed among external stakeholders that a reorganization of the department was warranted, the new department administration did not develop and communicate a clear vision of reorganization to stakeholders such as the Legislature, employees, or the employee union prior to initiating changes. Administrators developed a project status report that listed and tracked changes at the program and bureau level, and the Secretary met with managers to discuss these activities. However, the department never developed a formal comprehensive reorganization plan. A comprehensive plan would have provided a systemic vision of organizational change and specific enough information to establish a framework for communication and cooperation among employees assigned to the various functional areas. A formal plan also would have made clear what would constitute full implementation of the initiatives and how that implementation would be evaluated. Finally, it would have identified a process to use evaluative information to further improve operations.

Although a stated, shared vision may not be necessary to solve small operational problems, it is essential for guiding a large number of people through major change over time. Communicating change in conceptually and operationally clear initiatives lets employees know what is expected of them and why, reduces resistance to change, and empowers workers to make change-affirming decisions below the top of the hierarchy. Individuals involved in successful change are also more likely to create an organization better able to implement and respond to future change.

Reorganization was implemented without adequate preparation

Organization and policy changes were sometimes announced for immediate implementation, leaving employees little time to prepare for implementation. Changes generally were made statewide without any pilot testing to determine their systemic effects. As a result, many of the changes created unanticipated problems.

¹² Bryson, John M., *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1995.

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Staff were not always prepared for change

One of the reorganization initiatives was to redefine the missions and/or populations of selected prisons. Sometimes these changes occurred abruptly, creating difficulties for employees at the institutions. For example, the Correctional Mental Health Institution at River Junction, which housed inmates with severe mental illness, was closed in the summer of 1999. Both employees and inmates were displaced as a result of this closing. Employees were reassigned to nearby prisons and the inmates were moved to the Zephyrhills Correctional Institution. While Zephyrhills had a mental health unit and a portion of the prison population was mentally ill, employees had minimal time to prepare for the influx of a larger number of psychiatric inmates. Workers were not given additional training to ensure that they had the necessary skills to manage a predominantly psychiatric inmate population. Furthermore, the facility infrastructure was not evaluated to determine whether it was equipped to accommodate the larger and more varied psychiatric population. As a result, administrators struggled with problems such as how to separate psychiatric youthful offenders from adult psychiatric inmates, how to correctly house a death row psychiatric inmate, and how to meet the unique physical needs of female psychiatric inmates.

Some population changes failed to optimize facilities and programs. For example, both the education and vocation programs and a special-use dorm were underutilized as a result of population changes at the Jefferson Correctional Institution. Jefferson had successful education and vocation programs and a dormitory that meets the requirements for a residential community and was used to provide a dual diagnosis program whereby inmates with both mental health and substance abuse issues could be effectively treated. During reorganization, Jefferson's population was shifted from female to male inmates in an effort to move the women inmates closer to their South Florida homes. When the female population left, the dual diagnosis program moved south with it. Although the infrastructure was there, and the new male population was appropriate for reestablishing the program, a new dual diagnosis program was not started at the facility. Instead, the department contracted for a substance abuse program. To meet the substance abuse contract requirements for the number of inmates to be served, inmates were pulled from the education and vocation programs, thereby leaving them operating at approximately one-third of capacity.

Better planning and increased communication among security, health, and program employees could have avoided these types of problems.

The administration made little effort to gain employee acceptance for reorganization

Lack of communication about reorganization and budget reduction efforts have had a significant negative impact on Department of Corrections employee morale. The breadth of changes and the lack of information provided about how and when they would occur has unsettled employees. In addition, employees' perception that the administration discouraged questions and constructive criticism resulted in an organizational atmosphere of uncertainty, fear, and distrust.

Over 1,000 staff took new jobs or moved

Over 1,000 employees took new jobs or moved to new job locations as a result of reorganization. As discussed earlier, 1,050 support workers were asked to choose whether they wanted to go to service centers or take a new job at different, unspecified locations. Some of these workers uprooted their families, sold their homes, and purchased new homes to take new jobs, and others began extended commutes. In addition, classification officers were asked to choose between staying at their institutions or moving to new job sites to take probation positions. According to the department, of the 633 institutional classification officers statewide, 129 opted to become probation officers; the others remained at the institutions, took positions elsewhere in the department, or voluntarily terminated. For months the department did not specify exactly when these changes would take effect or when employees would be expected to move.

While the administration was reluctant to provide information out of concern that incomplete details would upset employees, the uncertainty created a flood of rumors that fed employee anxiety and undermined morale. For many employees, this situation was compounded by the frustration of reporting to new jobs for which training had not been provided, yet day-to-day work demands had to be met.

Because of the large number of personnel movements and the effort to retain employees, the department froze over 1,000 vacant positions while the details of reorganization were worked out. Because of the freeze, some employees had to do the work of two, or in some cases, three people. The increased work, coupled with a lack of information about continuing department changes, further increased tension while decreasing morale. Some employees were also upset about personnel decisions. For example, some workers resented that some individuals received sizable raises when they took jobs at the service centers; in some cases, salaries increased by 50% or more.

Budget reductions meant lost positions

Morale problems were exacerbated when, during the 2000 legislative session, the department failed to provide the Legislature a reorganization master plan, and lost additional positions. Employees again found

themselves in the midst of uncertainty about who would lose their jobs to meet the position reductions. The administration has not been forthcoming about its plans, saying only that it would not reduce correctional officer or correctional probation officer positions.

One of the first steps in reducing positions was the elimination of three of the seven service centers (Gainesville, Tampa, and Tallahassee). The department reports these closings displaced 255 employees, which includes those employees affected by the bumping rights of others.¹³ Of these, at least 36 employees had relocated to work at these service centers within the previous year. Of these 255, 151 moved to vacant positions elsewhere in the department or stayed in their positions, 28 bumped other employees out of their jobs, none were terminated, and 29 voluntarily left the department. Individuals from the closed centers that remained employed did not necessarily retain their salary increases; 42 employees took voluntary demotions.¹⁴

It is not clear what the extent of other reductions will be. Throughout the organization, administrators and support staff are bumping or being bumped from positions, being terminated, and resigning.

***Better communication
is needed***

Throughout the reorganization and budget reduction process, the administration's practice of releasing a minimal amount of information and appearing to discourage questions or constructive criticism resulted in an organizational atmosphere of uncertainty, fear, and distrust. During our fieldwork, we frequently encountered department employees that expressed a reluctance to provide information to us and/or speak their minds for fear of reprisal. While employees should eventually become acclimated to new positions and new job responsibilities over time, the administration needs to take steps to regain the trust of employees for the long-term good of the organization. As the department continues to evolve, the administration will need to increase communication and encourage an atmosphere in which workers at all levels can identify problems and generate solutions for improving operations.

The long-term effects of reorganization

The reorganization is likely to have a positive effect on long-term operations, but it is questionable whether the long-term effects on employee morale and performance will be positive. Operational changes aimed at increasing standardization and efficiency will, in all likelihood, constitute significant improvements over the decentralized and fragmented approach to business operations, inmate rules, and employee

¹³ A career service employee whose position is eliminated has the right to take another position from an employee who has less time in the career service system; this displacement is called "bumping."

¹⁴ These employee movement figures were provided by the department using the Job Changer Database. As of December 12, 2000, data reports are being reconciled and the department will report any discrepancies to the Legislature as soon as possible.

discipline that characterized the department prior to reorganization. We believe that increased standardization will alleviate a number of problems and concerns within the department and will allow for much more efficiency and effectiveness than in the past. We recommend that the administration begin now to evaluate the success of its reorganization and budget reduction initiatives and use this information to continue to improve operations. These processes should also be used to evaluate future change.

It is too early to tell what the long-term effect of the changes will be on employee morale and performance. Employees are being asked to work more efficiently and effectively, but often have been placed in different work environments, given new procedures to implement without training and guidance, and are having to implement these new procedures with fewer workers. The success of the department and its new administration depends on the cooperation of employees. We urge the Secretary to increase communication with employees, the Legislature, and other stakeholders and embrace constructive criticism to facilitate future change and realize the full potential of the reorganization effort.

Overarching Management Issues

In this chapter, we address three issues that cut across the department's program areas.

- By improving the quality of its data and developing a number of useful performance measures, the department is in a position to begin to use performance-based program budgeting effectively.
- The department needs to better coordinate its planning process for locating prisons, programs, and services to improve the efficient and cost-effective operation of the prison system.
- By employing basic tenets of fleet management, the agency can save \$586,962 annually through volume discounts and obtain \$150,000 by disposing of unused vehicles.

Effective performance-based program budgeting possible through improving data quality and developing useful performance measures

The performance of the Department of Corrections has often been evaluated on the basis of high-profile incidents, such as an escape from a major prison or major crimes committed by offenders that are in non-secure settings.¹⁵ Performance-based program budgeting has allowed the department to develop and report data so that the Legislature and the public can evaluate its performance based on comprehensive information rather than on single incidents.

The department's annual report historically presented extensive data regarding its inmate and offender populations (age, offense data, previous commitments to prison), as well as certain performance categories, such as per diem rates and escape data. However, it has been difficult to translate that data into a comprehensive evaluation of department performance.

Performance data is becoming more comprehensive

With the inception of performance-based program budgeting for the 1998-99 fiscal year, the department and the Legislature identified many measures for which data had not previously been maintained or reported. Due to the lack of historic data on these new measures, it is not yet clear how to assess department performance. Some of the new measures that have appeared in the General Appropriations Act include

¹⁵ Such major incidents include the escape of six inmates from Glades Correctional Institution in January 1995 and the Tallahassee murder committed by an inmate who had walked away from a work detail in Gadsden County in June 1990. While each of these incidents was evidence of significant performance defects on the part of the department, one cannot presume that the absence of incidents like these means that the department's performance is satisfactory.

- the number of vocational certificates earned by offenders per teacher,
- the number and percentage of offenders who abscond from supervision, and
- the number of inmate health care grievances that are upheld.

Until multi-year data become available for these measures, it is difficult to define a reasonable performance standard that can be used to evaluate department performance, or even to determine how useful the measure is in evaluating department performance.

As a result of the evolution of these measures, limited data was available to us to evaluate the department's performance during the first two years of performance-based program budgeting. While the department has made significant progress in developing and managing meaningful performance data, it has not yet established good performance measures for all of its activities. Where appropriate in the chapters that follow, we have identified measurement information that is useful and changes that are needed in the department's performance measures. If the department continues to improve its performance measures, the data will be more meaningful to the Legislature in future years as trends develop over time.

Planning process for prison location, programs, services needs better coordination to improve system's efficiency and cost-effectiveness

As OPPAGA staff assessed reorganization and the four department programs, the interrelated nature of all segments of the prison system became a central theme. Security drives inmate prison assignments; the characteristics of inmates assigned to each facility determine which programs are needed; the need to consolidate inmates by their health requirements impacts facility needs; and the effectiveness of community corrections impacts the size of the prison population. To properly manage one of the four major programs, it is essential to consider how changes in one program will affect the delivery of the other programs.

Department employees work in a fragmented environment

While department employees work together in many ways, they tend to work in "stovepipes," or line authorities, of activities that do not encourage shared discussion of proposals and discussion of the implications of those proposals across programs. As a result, instead of developing synergy, department staff work in a fragmented, less effective environment.

During the course of our review, we noted numerous examples of what we perceived to be the inefficient delivery of services within the state prison system. These situations reflect how competing considerations and the lack of interdepartmental coordination can cause inefficiency.

For example, as described in Chapter 6, correctional officers frequently transport inmates with mental health emergencies to prisons hundreds of miles away. The Office of Health Services determines the locations for emergency mental health beds on the basis of the total number of empty beds in the state, attempting to match resources with needs. However, these transfers often require the transferring prison to take two or more officers from their assigned posts within the prison to transport the prisoner to the receiving prison. Decisions about the locations of these emergency mental health centers and the policies regarding their use should be made in conjunction with the security staff that have to continually provide the cross-state transport so as to achieve the most effective approach to dealing with mental health emergencies.

While security takes priority over concerns related to education and other betterment programs, some operational decisions did not appropriately consider program issues. For example, in Chapter 2, we noted that the mission and population of Jefferson Correctional Institution were changed without adjusting education programming prior to the implementation of those decisions. Similarly, when inmates were transferred from one prison to another for health care consolidation, many inmates who were nearing the completion of certification or GED programs were transferred to new prisons without notice to program staff at the institutions and only limited effort to facilitate program completion.

The facility planning process needs to include all major facets of the prison system

A coordinated approach to department policy should be built into a comprehensive planning process. Secretary Moore has directed managers to develop a facility planning process that would link the risk level of inmates to projections of the type of prison beds needed. This is a positive step that is overdue. However, comprehensive facility planning should also include all major facets of the prison system and address not only new prisons, but also the expansion and renovation of existing facilities. Without a comprehensive approach that addresses health, education and vocational training, and other programs in addition to inmate population projections, the probability of inefficient operations increases. A comprehensive planning approach will increase the likelihood that prisons of the appropriate type, size, number, configuration, and location are available to yield the most efficient correctional programs and services possible.

We recommend that the department enhance the facility planning process to include other key program areas. In addition, managers should encourage employees to coordinate so as to ensure the optimum safety, security, effectiveness, and efficiency of operations of the state's prison system.

Through better management, the agency can save \$586,962 annually through contracts for parts and obtain \$150,000 for unused vehicles

Vehicles assigned to state agencies represent a substantial investment and operating expense. Tracking the number of days a vehicle is used each month, the mileage it accumulates, and keeping a record of preventative maintenance performed on the vehicle enables an agency to prolong the life of its vehicles. It also enables agency officials to identify those vehicles that are no longer needed or have excessively high operating costs and need to be replaced. The department has a fleet of state-owned vehicles registered on the statewide Equipment Management Information System. Included in the fleet are buses, sedans, trucks, utility vehicles, vans, and station wagons. The department relies on inmates to perform some of the basic maintenance procedures on these vehicles.

It is unclear how many vehicles the department has

Until January 2000, and despite maintaining a fleet this size, the department has never had a fleet manager to monitor the overall acquisition, operation, maintenance, and disposal of vehicles. Consequently, agency officials cannot yet provide an accurate accounting of how many vehicles it actually has. The statewide Equipment Management Information System reports 3,024 vehicles assigned to the agency, but the recently hired fleet manager reports that there are additional vehicles not registered on the system.¹⁶ He further reports that there are between 500 and 800 vehicles owned by the agency that need to be disposed of, and he believes the department can get an average of \$300 per vehicle. Disposing of these vehicles would provide the agency with \$150,000 at a minimum.

For the 3,024 vehicles the agency has registered on the statewide Equipment Management Information System, even the most rudimentary kinds of records have not been accurately maintained. Accurate information showing how many days during the year the vehicles sat idle and how many miles the vehicles were driven has not been captured.

- Only 1,231 vehicles, 41% of the agency's fleet, showed an odometer's year-end mileage and total mileage as matching, suggesting that inaccurate odometer mileage had been entered into the Equipment Management Information System.
- For 171 vehicles, odometers showed zero miles but, according to the information system, were driven every day of the year.

¹⁶ OPPAGA has conducted two reviews of the statewide Equipment Management Information System. Both reports provide the Department of Management Services with guidance on how it can modify that system to improve its use among state agencies. See *Review of the Equipment Management Information System*, [Report No. 96-02](#), July 29, 1996, and *Follow-Up Review on the Equipment Management Information System*, [Report No. 98-42](#), January 1999.

- For 47 vehicles, odometers showed zero miles but the information system showed they had been driven three or more days during the year.

Large volume discounts would result in savings

The agency has failed to take advantage of the large volume discounts that could be realized through vendor contracts. This occurs because purchasing staff at each institution buy vehicle parts through local suppliers. Previous OPPAGA reports have shown how discounts on vehicle maintenance can reduce agency costs between 10% and 30% annually.¹⁷ Since the department uses inmate labor to repair vehicles, it is already achieving valuable labor savings. However, purchasing vehicle parts at a discount would further augment savings already being achieved. If the department received discounts of 10% for its vehicle parts purchases, as is being achieved by other agencies, the department could save \$586,962 annually, based on Fiscal Year 1999-2000 expenditures.¹⁸

Added to the high cost of the department's general failure to effectively manage its vehicle fleet is the fact that the agency is reimbursing mileage to agency probation staff who drive their cars so extensively that it would be cheaper to assign them a state vehicle. This problem is discussed more fully in Chapter 7. (See page 87.)

With the exceptions noted in the Community Corrections chapter of this report, and unless the public safety is jeopardized by prisoners being transported in unreliable vehicles, we recommend that the Legislature not appropriate any agency funds for additional vehicle purchases until the department's fleet management practices are improved. The Auditor General is presently conducting an audit of the agency's vehicle maintenance practices and will report his findings in an upcoming report. That report may offer the department guidance on additional corrective action required.

¹⁷ See OPPAGA's *Review of State Vehicle Maintenance*, [Report No. 96-08](#), September 25, 1996, OPPAGA's Program Evaluation and Justification Review entitled *Support Program Administered by the Department of Management Services*, [Report No. 98-08](#), August 1998, and *Follow-up Report on the Use of Assigned State Vehicles and Personal Vehicle Use by State Employees*, [Report No. 98-12](#), September 1998.

¹⁸ For Fiscal Year 2000-01 General Appropriations Act, this savings would occur in item number 616.

Security and Institutional Operations

Background

The purpose of the Department of Corrections' Security and Institutional Operations Program is to protect the public and provide a secure and safe environment for incarcerated offenders and the officers that maintain custody of them. The program maintains custody of more than 71,000 inmates at 57 major prisons, 37 forestry and work camps, 5 road prisons, and various other types of facilities.¹⁹ (See Exhibit 4.) This review assesses operations at the major prisons operated by the department.

Exhibit 4

The Department Maintains 128 Correctional Facilities

Type of Prison Facility	Total	Inmates
Major prisons ¹	52	56,015
Work camps adjacent to a prison	27	7,043
Privately contracted prisons	5	3,790
Work release centers	29	2,309
Stand-alone work/forestry camps, drug treatment centers	10	1,660
Road prisons	5	382
Contract jail beds	-	34
Total Department of Corrections Facilities	128	71,233

¹Institutions with separate units and hospitals are counted as one institution. These institutions are Apalachee East and West units; Central Florida Reception Center Main, East, and South units; Dade Main and Annex units; Gulf Main and West units; Hamilton Main and Annex units; North Florida Reception Center Main and West units; and Sumter and Boot Camp units.

Source: Department of Corrections June 30, 2000, data.

The department assigns inmates to these facilities according to a classification system that is based on several factors, including the crimes they have committed, their behavior in prison, the length of time left on their sentences, and their need for programs such as substance abuse treatment. Custody levels include minimum, for lower risk prisoners;

¹⁹ This includes five prisons that are privately operated under contract through the Correctional Privatization Commission and housed 3,790 prisoners on June 30, 2000. There were 50 inmates in contract Work Release Centers and 74 inmates in contract drug treatment centers that are not included in the 3,790 inmates housed in private prisons. Because the privately operated prisons are contracted by the Correctional Privatization Commission, they are not included as part of this review of the Department of Corrections.

medium; close, for high-risk inmates; and maximum custody, for death row prisoners.

The Security and Institutional Operations Program employs 19,498 workers, most of whom are certified correctional officers. Employee costs are the biggest expense in the program budget, but correctional officers are also the front line of security. Maintaining an aging infrastructure and building new prisons to prepare for anticipated increases in the prison population also affect the program budget.

Program funding

The Security and Institutional Operations Program is the largest public safety investment in the state. In Fiscal Year 2000-01, the Legislature appropriated the program \$1,077.9 million; this is approximately 65% of the department's total budget. General revenue funds account for approximately 94% of the program's total funding. (See Exhibit 5.)

Exhibit 5

Security and Institutional Operations Is Supported by General Revenue

Funding Source	Fiscal Year 2000-01 (in millions)
General Revenue	\$1,014.4
Trust Funds	
Correctional Work Program Trust Fund	25.8
Grants and Donations Trust Fund	23.0
Inmate Welfare Trust Fund	14.2
Operating Trust Fund	0.4
Florida Agricultural Exposition Trust Fund	0.1
Total	\$1,077.9

Source: Fiscal Year 2000-01 Appropriations Act.

Program Performance

The department has reduced the number of inmate escapes, but violence inside the prisons is on the increase

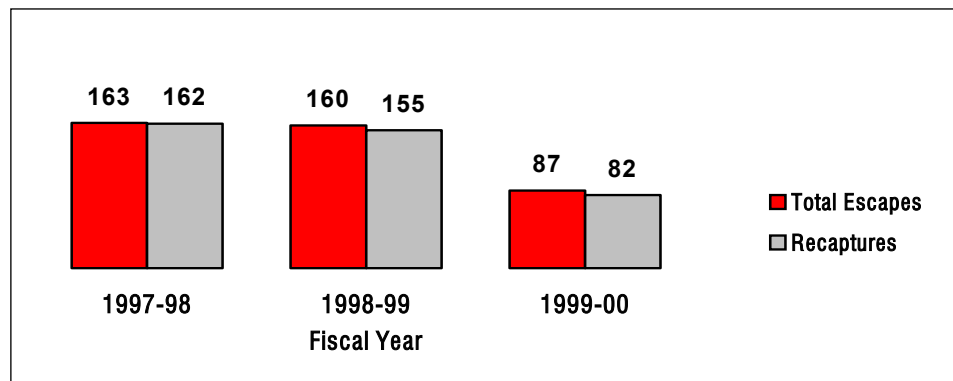
Since public safety is a primary mission of the department, preventing inmate escapes and protecting inmates and workers within the prisons are key aspects of department performance. The department has succeeded in lowering the number of escapes from custody, but the number of batteries within the prisons is increasing.

Most of the escapes that occur in Florida are from non-secure supervision, such as work release centers or unarmed work squads. For example, inmates who are near the end of their prison terms are placed in work release centers where they are allowed to go to a “free-world” job during the day and return to the work release center in the evening. These centers are residential facilities designed to help the inmate begin a transition back to living and working in the community and do not have secure or armed perimeters. Because these offenders are still serving a portion of their prison terms, they are still inmates, and if they fail to return from work at the prescribed time, or if they walk away from the center without authorization, it is considered an escape.

Escapes have declined The department has succeeded in reducing the number of inmate escapes, both in the long and in the short term. The number of escapes declined from 324 in Fiscal Year 1994-95 to 163 in Fiscal Year 1997-98 to 87 in Fiscal Year 1999-2000, a decrease of 73% over a six-year period and of 46% over a two-year period. Of the 87 inmates that escaped in Fiscal Year 1999-2000, only 12 were housed in a major prison or work camp. Of those 12, 2 escaped from the secure perimeter of major state-operated prisons, and 2 escaped from the secure perimeter of a privately operated prison.²⁰ The other eight escapes were from assignments such as work camps or work squads. The remaining 75 escapes (86%) were from work release centers or other non-secure facilities.

Over 97% of inmates that escaped in the past three years have been recaptured, as shown in Exhibit 6. Half of the escaped inmates were recaptured within 5 days in Fiscal Year 1999-2000, and the average time to recapture escaped inmates was 22.3 days. The recapturing of inmates is a joint effort of department and law enforcement officers.

Exhibit 6
Escapes Have Declined, and Most Inmates Have Been Recaptured



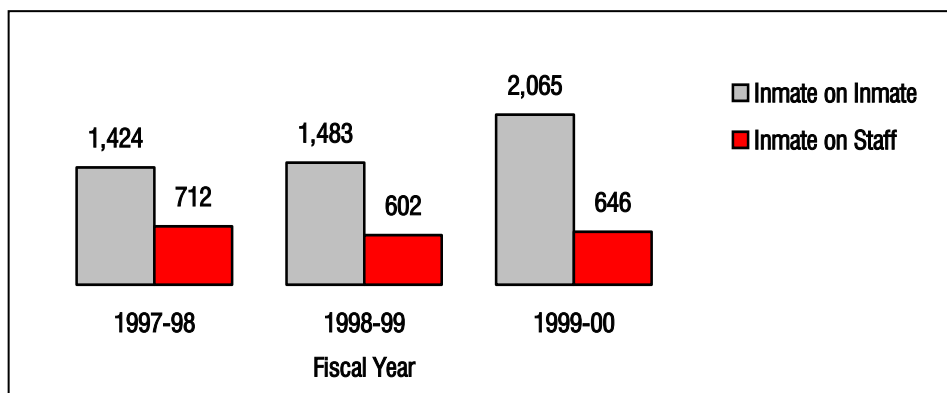
Source: Department of Corrections data.

²⁰ Two inmates escaped from a private prison, Wackenhut’s South Bay Correctional Institution, on August 11, 1999. We discussed those escapes in our review of the South Bay facility, [Report No. 99-39](#), March 2000.

Batteries have increased

While escapes are declining, violence within the prisons is on the rise. During the 1999-2000 fiscal year, the department reported a 39% increase in batteries committed by inmates on other inmates. The number of batteries committed by inmates against department employees was up by 7%. ²¹ As shown in Exhibit 7, the number of reported batteries against inmates represented a marked increase over the previous two years. The number of batteries against department employees was higher than 1998-99, but lower than the number reported for the 1997-98 fiscal year.

**Exhibit 7
Batteries Have Increased**



Source: Department of Corrections data.

The increase in batteries may be related to the fact that inmates are staying in prison longer and their ability to earn time off for good behavior has been reduced, thereby decreasing the incentive to stay out of trouble. In addition, research indicates that inmate idleness can be a contributing factor to violence and institutional disturbances. ²²

Prisoners are staying in prison longer

Due to changes in Florida law during the 1990s, prisoners are staying in prison longer than offenders sentenced in the previous decade. Criminals who committed crimes on or after October 1, 1995, must now serve at least 85% of their sentences. ²³ Inmates sentenced for crimes committed prior to that time could earn more than 50% reductions in their sentences for good behavior; now the maximum reduction is 15%. In the 1994-95 fiscal year, over 50% of the inmates released from prison had served less than half of their terms in prison, and only 10% had served more than

²¹ These numbers are based upon the number of reports made by correctional officers and other staff. Batteries that are not observed by correctional officers or reported by the inmates cannot be counted.

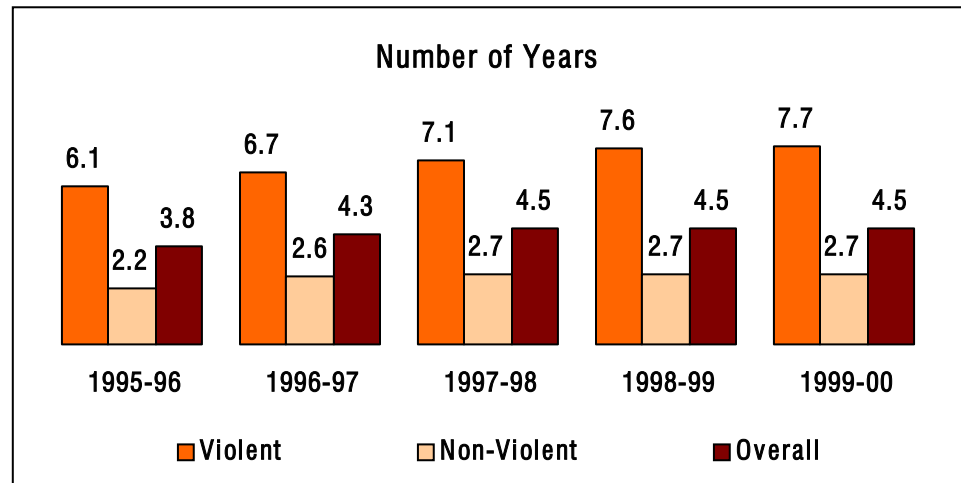
²² OPPAGA has issued two reports on inmate idleness; see *Policy Review of Inmate Idleness Reduction Activities*, [Report No. 95-27](#), January 1996, and *Follow-up Report on the Inmate Idleness Reduction Activities*, [Report No. 97-51](#), February 1998.

²³ The remainder of their sentences may be reduced through awards of "gain-time" for good behavior.

80% of their sentences. By the 1999-2000 fiscal year, only 12% of the released inmates had served less than half their sentences, while 73% had served more than 80% of their sentences.

As of June 30, 2000, 56.7% of Florida's prison population had been sentenced under the minimum 85% of sentence served law, and that percentage of the prison population is projected to climb to 80% within two years. As a result, the average length of time in prison has risen. (See Exhibit 8.)

Exhibit 8
Violent Criminals Are Projected to Serve Longer Sentences



Source: Department of Corrections data.

Recent legislation may further extend the length of incarceration

In addition to serving a greater percentage of their sentences, Florida's violent offenders were also required to serve longer sentences due to laws passed during the 1999 legislative session. The 10-20-Life legislation imposed graduated sentences for those who use guns during the commission of crimes. Criminals convicted of using a gun during a crime receive a mandatory 10-year sentence; if they pull the trigger, they receive 20 years; if they injure or kill a person with a gun, they receive a mandatory 25 years-to-life sentence. Other legislation known as the 3 Strikes law requires that violent criminals convicted for the third time receive a mandatory sentence of 5, 15, 30 years, or life, depending on the degree of the felony conviction.

As more violent criminals stay in prison for longer periods of time, inmate management will become increasingly more challenging.

Due to a shortage of work assignments, idleness remains a problem

Effective inmate management is essential to maintaining control of the institutions. A typical prison in Florida houses more than 1,000 inmates, with about 40 correctional officers on duty at any given time.

Work and program assignments reduce idleness

Since gain-time has been reduced, the most significant component of inmate management is work and program assignments. However, the department does not have enough work and program assignments to keep all of its inmates busy for even 40 hours each week; as a result, many inmates have idle time not only on the evenings and weekends, but during the day.

The department can require able-bodied inmates to work both inside and outside the prison walls. Inside the walls, inmates assist in daily operations such as the laundry, food service, and building maintenance. In addition, the department provides inmates to prison industries to manufacture many items, including license plates, prison clothing, and office supplies. Outside the prison, the department provides squads of inmates to public works projects in the community, such as road repair or park maintenance.

In addition, the department assigns inmates to education, vocational, and substance abuse programs. Substance abuse and literacy programs are now mandatory for inmates that need them, and inmates that do not cooperate with these requirements are subject to disciplinary action.

Despite the wide variety of assignments available, the department does not have enough work or program slots to keep all inmates busy on a full-time basis. The work and program assignments are deficient by 10,481 slots, creating an idleness rate of 18.8% of the available prisoners.²⁴ (See Exhibit 9.) This is an improvement from 1995 when the idleness rate was 23%.²⁵

Exhibit 9

The Department Needs 10,481 Additional Work or Program Assignments to Fully Assign Available Prisoners

Assignment Status	Number of Prisoners
Total Prison Population, June 30, 2000	71,233
Less: Prisoners assigned to private prisons	(3,790)
Less: Prisoners unavailable for assignment ¹	(11,967)
Prisoners available for assignment	55,476
Less: Full-time work/program assignments available	(44,995)
Total additional full-time work or program assignments needed to fully assign all available prisoners	10,481

¹ Prisoners may be unavailable for work for health care, disciplinary work or confinement, restrictive custody, reception and orientation, or in transit between prison facilities.

Source: Department of Corrections data.

²⁴ According to the *1999 Corrections Yearbook*, the national average of inmates not assigned to work is 18.7%.

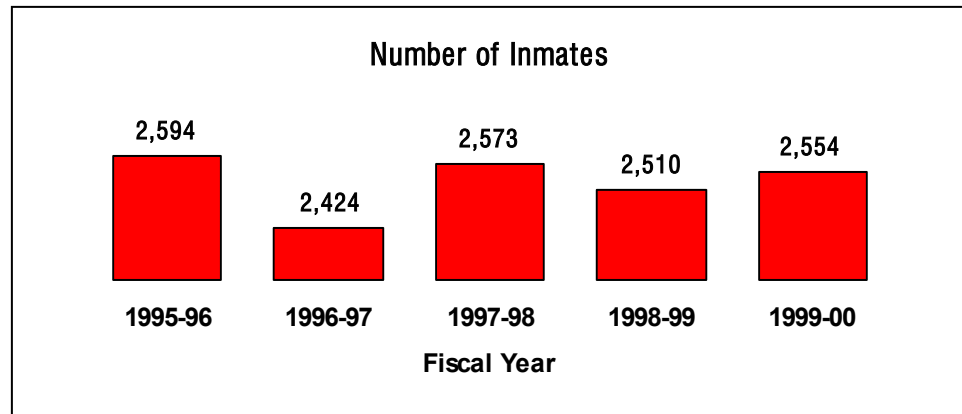
²⁵ See *Policy Review of Inmate Idleness Reduction Activities*, [Report No. 95-27](#), January 1996.

Expanding the number of work assignments has been problematic for the department. Work squads such as road crews that work outside the fence require low-risk inmates, and these inmates are already fully assigned. Work running the institutions is also already maximized; in fact, some options currently under consideration by the department, such as privatizing food services, could result in a decrease in the number of inmate assignments for institutional work.²⁶

The potential to expand prison industries is limited

For several years the department and the Legislature have sought to increase inmate work assignments by increasing the number of prison industries. Prison Rehabilitative Industries and Diversified Enterprises, Inc. (PRIDE), did slightly increase the number of inmates it used during the 1999-2000 fiscal year. (See Exhibit 10.) However, this represented a net decrease of 40 work assignments since the 1995-96 fiscal year, whereas the inmate population has grown by 6,900 since 1996. The PRIDE program provides work for less than 5% of the inmate population who are available for assignment. Despite numerous efforts to add and expand industries, the potential for significant expansion of the prison industries programs is limited.²⁷

Exhibit 10
PRIDE Has Not Increased Its Inmate Workforce Over the Past Five Years



Source: Department of Corrections data.

More programs would reduce idleness

Expanding the number of educational, vocational, and substance abuse programs would be one way to reduce idleness. In Chapter 5, we recommend that the department provide the Legislature information

²⁶ The department plans to privatize all of its prison food service operations during Fiscal Year 2001-02. The department estimates that it can save \$8 million and eliminate 472 staff positions by competitively contracting food services statewide. This issue allows for three security staff to remain in the kitchen at each facility to maintain security standards. The remaining salary dollars will be transferred to food service to fund the competitively contracted food services.

²⁷ Prison industries often encounter public resistance when industries that would compete directly or indirectly with free world industries are proposed. There are a limited number of industries that can be operated profitably with secure prison labor without at the same time threatening to compete with other Florida businesses.

about the need to enhance programming and the additional funding that would be required.

***Recreation also
reduces idleness***

Even for inmates who are assigned, work and/or programs occupy only part of the day. After hours, there are few organized activities to keep prisoners busy. The department does provide limited recreation, such as basketball, softball, television, and other game activities. The department generally uses these activities as an incentive for inmates who obey prison rules. However, these recreational management tools are available only so long as the existing equipment and televisions remain functional, as current law restricts the department from purchasing replacement equipment. Although public prisons are restricted from spending funds for recreational equipment and televisions, private prisons are not restricted from purchasing these tools for inmate management.

To increase the inmate management tools available to the department, we recommend that the Legislature amend s. 944.215, *Florida Statutes*, to authorize the department to spend up to 1% of the inmate canteen profits at each prison for the purchase of recreational equipment for structured activities for inmates that have fulfilled their daily work and program requirements. In Fiscal Year 1999-2000, 1% would have been approximately \$2,600 per prison. Correctional officers report that it is becoming increasingly difficult to manage large numbers of inmates with the limited incentives for good behavior available.

Retaining effective security officers requires changes in training and certification

Correctional officers remain the backbone of institutional security. However, the department has had a long-term problem hiring and retaining trained security officers. The department frequently has to hire untrained staff and pay them while they train at state expense. This approach is costly and makes it difficult to promptly fill vacant positions with new officers who can be assigned to the compound. Furthermore, because counties also need correctional officers and often pay higher salaries than the state, the trained officers working for the department are primary candidates for county jobs.

Training is expensive

Florida law requires correctional officers to be certified law enforcement officers under Department of Law Enforcement standards. Training is expensive; at an average cost of \$9,429 per officer for training and salary, the department spent \$8.7 million training 925 officers in Fiscal Year 1999-2000.²⁸ Florida's training program for correctional officers is one of the most extensive in the country. However, according to some employees, the training also includes skills that are not needed to work in

²⁸ The average training cost is based on \$884,684 tuition cost and \$7,837,108 salary cost for 925 trainees.

Florida's prisons. For example, officers are trained in some police skills, such as arresting and fingerprinting of suspected criminals, that correctional officers do not need. While the training program contributes to a sense of professionalism among correctional officers, it does not appear to be providing the state with a value proportionate to its costs.

Most new hires that leave do not reimburse the state for training

Many new correctional officers trained by the state leave shortly after they are hired. In Fiscal Year 1999-2000, the department reports that 104, or 11% of new hire trainees left department employment on their own initiative within one year of their employment. In recognition of the tendency for officers to leave after a short time, the 1974 Legislature passed a law authorizing the department to require employees who chose to leave within 12 months of being hired to reimburse the state for training expenses. One purpose of this law was to discourage individuals from receiving training at state expense and then using the certification to quickly leave for a job outside state government. However, of the 104 new hires that left on their own initiative in Fiscal Year 1999-2000, only 18 partially reimbursed the state for their training expenses. For these 104 officers, the department paid salaries of \$881,145 during training and tuition costs of \$99,467. Since the department recovered only \$9,158, the state lost more than \$90,000 on recoverable tuition costs, as well as losing salary costs and trained officers. The department was unable to explain why it has not sought to recover these training expenses.

Turnover leads to overtime expenses

The department continues to experience high turnover of correctional officers. The department reports 983 vacancies within the correctional officer classifications (6%) and an additional 1,442 officers (13.5%) are not yet certified. The department reports that the Fiscal Year 1999-2000 rate for officers leaving the department was 13.6%. As a result, the prisons are often understaffed, and officers must work overtime to meet minimal staffing levels. During the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2000-01, the department spent \$2.7 million of the \$5.8 million the Legislature had budgeted for overtime for the entire fiscal year.

To address the turnover and training problems, the department has proposed reducing the number of classroom curriculum hours required for prison security officers and supplementing that training with a formalized on-the-job training program. Department officials stated that this approach would produce correctional officers who are trained specifically for the responsibilities of prison work at less cost.

The benefits of the proposed change in training correctional officers include

- cost savings through fewer and better focused training classroom hours;
- newly hired correctional officers will be able to start their jobs sooner;

- correctional officers will be trained in skills specifically needed in the prison, as opposed to skills needed for local government positions; and
- the likelihood of reduced turnover in correctional officer positions.

We recommend that the Legislature amend Ch. 943, *Florida Statutes*, to implement these revisions for correctional officer certification. We further recommend that the department collect training costs for officers that leave within 12 months of being hired as directed by law.

Retaining trained, experienced officers and reducing inmate idleness should enhance the public safety and institutional security aspects of program performance. The other key performance indicator for the Security and Institutional Operations Program is cost.

Keeping prison costs low depends on cost-effective operations and prudent prison construction decisions

Program costs include both construction and operation of the prisons. During the period of our review, Florida had excess prison capacity, so inmate per diem costs were a more important indicator of fiscal performance than construction costs. However, as the Legislature and the department prepare to build more prisons to meet the anticipated future increase in prison population, cost-effective construction is also a concern.

Florida's incarceration costs rank below the national average

The most basic measure of correctional cost is inmate per diem, which is the average daily cost for each inmate within the prison system. This cost includes operational costs only—the cost of security staffing, food and food service, classification staffing, and programs. It does not include the cost of prison construction. Florida's incarceration costs rank below the national average of \$56.46. For the 1998-99 fiscal year, the department estimated that the average inmate per-diem cost was \$52.26 for state-operated institutions. When education and health services are deducted from this amount, the average cost was \$40.99.

Several factors should allow the department to control Florida's per diem costs. As described in Chapter 2, many institutional program functions, such as maintenance, have been centralized at the service centers and are being standardized. This reorganization should allow the Security and Institutional Operations Program to decrease costs through economies of scale and increased efficiency. Also, the department is working to lower inmate food costs through increased inmate gardening.

In addition, the department has made security enhancements that not only increase public safety, but also reduce the number of officers required, thereby reducing ongoing staffing costs that drive up per diem costs. The department has reduced the number of officers stationed on

the perimeter of the prisons through increased technological security equipment and improved barriers such as razor-wire fencing.

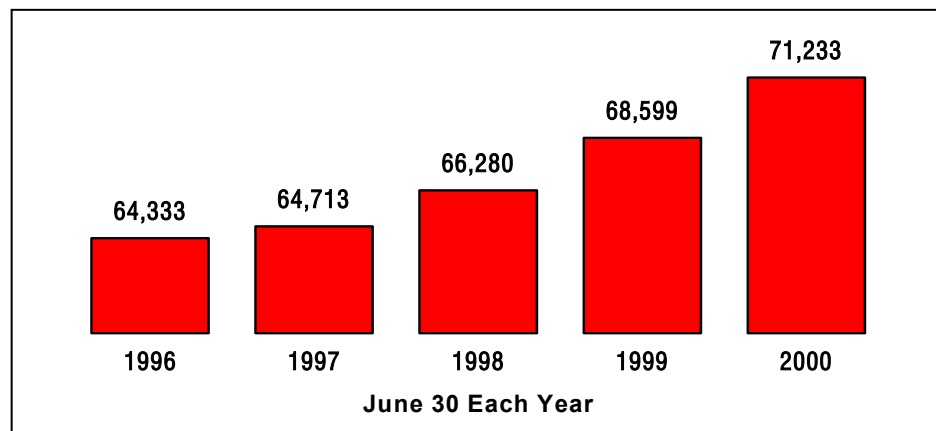
The department has developed a multi-year plan for maintaining the security of its prisons. This plan includes such items as improved perimeter security, improved locking mechanisms for cells and doors where old locks have not yet been replaced, and adoption of the 800mhz radio system for its officers. At the present time, the department is requesting \$7.5 million for security enhancements. Most of the proposed enhancements would create redundant security systems—that is, an additional barrier or security feature that will come into play should existing barriers be breached and existing security features fail. Generally speaking, inmates cannot escape from the department's prisons without a combination of human errors and technical failures.

***Operating near capacity
reduces per diem costs***

Per diem costs are also greatly affected by prison capacity. Larger prisons can achieve lower per diems due to economies of scale because fixed costs are divided among a higher number of inmates. Likewise, operating at a higher percentage of capacity more fully uses available resources increasing cost efficiency. For example, the department was operating at 99.7% of its available beds in January 2000. This was accomplished by holding 6,317 beds in reserve without staffing them to control costs. At the same time, the department had the additional beds in reserve for housing future population increases.

As shown in Exhibit 11, Florida's inmate population is increasing. As a result, the prisons will operate at increased percentage of capacity, creating a positive effect on per diem rates in the short term. However, as Florida nears capacity it must plan ahead to surpassing the present capacity, which is projected to occur in 2004.

Exhibit 11
Florida's Inmate Population Is Increasing



Source: Department of Corrections data.

Four site selection considerations should be addressed

As the department prepares to build additional prisons, it needs to identify cost-efficient practices for site selection and preparation and facility planning. In our reviews of private prisons, we noted that the department often spends more to prepare donated prison sites than the private vendors spent preparing purchased sites.²⁹ Although this is partly due to the department strategy of preparing larger sites so that they are ready for future expansion, this may not always be the most economical strategy. We believe that there are at least four major considerations that should be included in any site selection by the department:

- site purchase and preparation costs;
- construction costs, including the potential availability and use of inmate labor (inmate labor is not necessarily the most economical or efficient way to build a prison);
- the potential labor pool for correctional officers and for health services and program staffing; and
- the mission and population of the prison, including gender, programs, and type of inmate population.

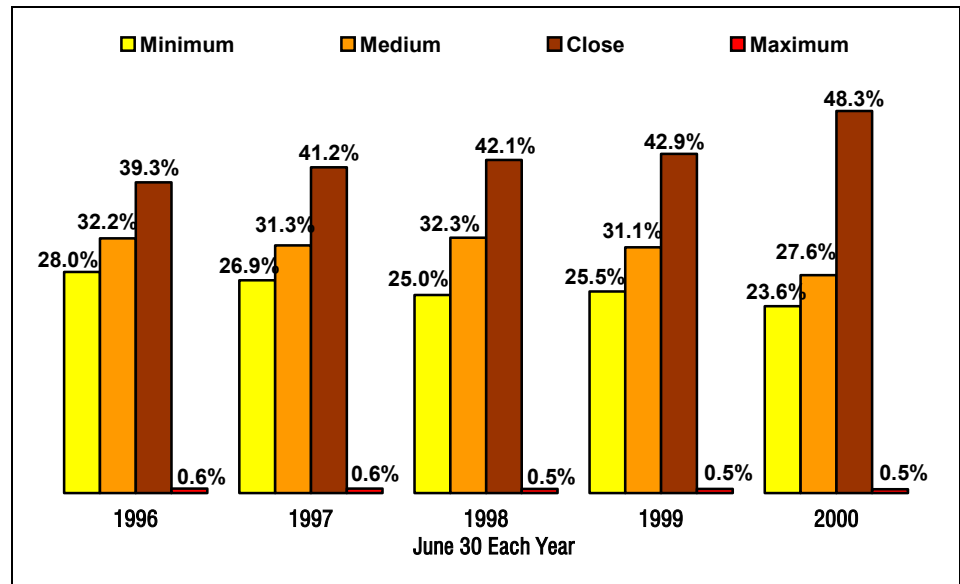
A new prototype prison should help contain costs

The department has identified a new prototype prison that is more compact and uses less land area, thereby reducing site acquisition and preparation costs, perimeter security costs, and prison operating costs. Use of this model should help keep construction costs down. When preparing for new facilities, we recommend that the department identify viable sites by taking into consideration all four key considerations listed above and use the new prototype prison to achieve cost-effective construction.

Another consideration that affects both construction and per diem costs is the type of prison cell configuration used. Cells that house two persons are more expensive to build than open bay-style dorms. However, once in operation, cells may cost less because they require fewer officers to supervise, although the cell staffing pattern allows for less staffing flexibility than open bays. During the 1990s the department increased the proportion of new construction that uses cells rather than open-bay dormitories so as to provide a more secure compound. As shown in Exhibit 12, the percentage of close custody prisoners, which are typically housed in cells, has increased in each of the last four years. Of the department's total prison bed capacity of 75,638, 37% is now cell-style. This year, the department has begun to develop a facility planning mechanism that will assist in determining the proportion of cell and open bay housing needed in future construction.

²⁹ *Private Prison Review: South Bay Correctional Facility Provides Savings and Success; Room for Improvement*, [Report No. 99-39](#), March 2000; *Private Prison Review: Lake City Correctional Facility Experienced Start-Up Problems, But It Has Improved*, [Report No. 99-33](#), February 2000; *Review of Bay Correctional Facility and Moore Haven Correctional Facility*, [Report No. 97-68](#), April 1998; and *Follow-up Report on Gadsden Correctional Institution*, [Report No. 97-56](#), March 1998.

Exhibit 12
Close Custody Prisoners Comprise Growing Percentages
of the Prison Population



Source: Department of Corrections data.

***Over 300 small
construction projects
have languished***

The department's effort to standardize facilities and equipment should help the department achieve additional cost savings in the area of facility construction and maintenance, which has been operating inefficiently. We found that the department has had 326 small fixed capital outlay construction projects that have been proposed, approved, funded and started at a total cost of \$129,426,528, or an average cost of \$397,015 per project started, but not completed. This includes 99 construction projects that were funded at a cost of \$44,783,791 for fiscal years previous to or including 1995-96, that remain incomplete five or more years after being funded at an average cost of \$452,362. Since it has not been a priority to the department to get these construction projects finished, it appears that a number of these projects could have been eliminated and their expense could have been avoided. The department has recognized the time lag problem in completing projects and has reorganized construction and maintenance activities to address this issue.

We recommend that the department continue to monitor construction projects to ensure the timely completion of all funded projects, or seriously consider contracting the projects out with a required timely completion date. If the department's efforts to complete construction projects on a timely schedule are not successful, the Legislature should require any capital construction project costing over a certain threshold, for example \$100,000, to be submitted to the Department of Management Services for review, approval, and monitoring until project completion.

Table 4A

Statutory Requirements for Program Evaluations and Justification Reviews

Section 11.513(3), *Florida Statutes*, provides that OPPAGA Program and Justification Reviews shall address nine issue areas. Our conclusions on these issues as they relate to the Security and Institutional Operations Program are summarized below.

Issue	OPPAGA Conclusions
The identifiable cost of the program	For the 1999-2000 fiscal year, the Legislature appropriated \$1,077.9 million and 19,498 positions to the Department of Corrections for security and institutional operations. This includes \$74.6 million for the payment of contracts with private companies through the Correctional Privatization Commission for the operation of five privately operated prisons: Gadsden, Bay, Moore Haven, South Bay, and Lake City correctional facilities.
The specific purpose of the program, as well as the specific public benefit derived therefrom	The purpose of the Department of Corrections' Security and Institutional Operations Program is to "protect the public and provide a secure and safe environment for incarcerated offenders and the staff that maintain custody of them."
Progress towards achieving the outputs and outcomes associated with the program	Although the department has significantly reduced the number of escapes, there were two escapes from within the secure perimeter of major prisons during 1999-2000. The goal of not allowing any escapes from within the secure perimeter was met in 1998-99, but not in 1999-2000. While it is admirable to set a goal of no escapes, maintaining absolutely escape-proof prisons may be impossible or could be cost-prohibitive.
An explanation of circumstances contributing to the state agency's ability to achieve, not achieve, or exceed its projected outputs and outcomes, as defined in s. 216.011, <i>F.S.</i> , associated with the program	Inmate assaults on inmates have increased and exceeded the standard set in 1999-2000 by 518 (33.6%). Inmate assaults on department employees have increased and exceeded the standard by 54 (9.1%). The department says the more violent inmate population serving longer sentences contributed to these higher levels of assaults. If standards and performance measures were tracked by inmate custody level, the problem area could be identified and perhaps corrective action taken to better control the number of assaults or adjust the standards.
Alternative placement or courses of action that would result in administering the program more efficiently and effectively	<p>The Legislature has privatized five prisons and directed OPPAGA to assess whether these facilities have realized their potential for cost savings. The results have been mixed. Decisions to privatize future prisons should be based on an improved methodology for establishing the annual per diem rates to ensure that the private prisons provide a cost savings each year of the contract. The department has also privatized many of its institutional operations and program functions, such as food service.</p> <p>The department needs better planning to ensure that it has the number and types of prison facilities available in the locations needed to take care of and secure the evolving inmate population according to the risk the population presents at the most cost-effective level.</p>

Issue	OPPAGA Conclusions
	<p>To administer Security and Institutional Operations more efficiently and effectively,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Legislature should assess information from the department concerning the cost-effectiveness of creating more program slots to reduce inmate idleness and recidivism; the Legislature should authorize the department to spend no more than 1% of the inmate canteen profits at each prison for the purchase of recreational equipment for structured activities for inmates that have fulfilled their daily work and program assignments; the Legislature should amend Ch. 943, <i>F.S.</i>, to implement revisions to requirements for correctional officer certification; and when preparing for new facilities, the department should identify viable sites using four key considerations and use the new prototype prison to achieve cost-effective construction.
The consequences of discontinuing the program	The public would not be protected from convicted criminals.
Determination as to public policy; which may include recommendations as to whether it would be sound public policy to continue or discontinue funding the program, either in whole or in part	This program is essential to the protection of the public from convicted criminals and should continue to be funded.
Whether the information reported pursuant to s. 216.03(5), <i>F.S.</i> , has relevance and utility for the evaluation of the program	The performance measures reported are relevant and useful to evaluate the performance of the program.
Whether state agency management has established control systems sufficient to ensure that performance data are maintained and supported by state agency records and accurately presented in state agency performance reports	The department's inspector general has reviewed performance data and has made recommendations to ensure that the data are maintained and supported by agency records and accurately presented in the department's reports. The inspector general's report included corrective action taken by management to correct deficiencies noted by the review.

Source: OPPAGA analysis.

Education and Programs

Background

Florida Statutes define the Department of Corrections' purpose as two-fold: to protect the public through the incarceration and supervision of offenders and to rehabilitate offenders through the use of work, programs, and services. The Office of Program Services supports both aspects of this mission through a range of programs designed to promote inmates' institutional adjustment and facilitate their return to society as productive, law-abiding citizens.

The majority of inmates entering Florida's correctional system lack basic educational and employment skills. Nearly 80% test below the ninth grade literacy level. Compounding this problem, over 60% of the inmates have a history of substance abuse. Since most prison inmates eventually will be released, programs are critical to the process of preparing inmates for the day they return to society. In this chapter, we address four major areas of programming for inmates: academic education, vocational education, substance abuse treatment, and transition skills.³⁰

- **Academic education** programs are provided at 52 of the department's institutions. These programs include the Mandatory Literacy Program, Adult Basic Education, General Education Development, and special education. The Mandatory Literacy Program is a 150-hour literacy training program required by statute for inmates, with two or more years remaining on their sentence, who score below a ninth grade reading level. Adult Basic Education provides basic reading, writing, and math skills through the 8.9 grade level. General Education Development is a high school equivalency degree program for inmates who score at the ninth grade level or higher. Special education services are provided to inmates with disabilities who are eligible to receive special services required by state and federal law.
- **Vocational education** courses are offered in 44 institutions and one work release center. Vocational education programs provide training that leads to certification in 44 different occupational areas. These occupations range from lower-skill jobs such as construction trades

³⁰ For a brief description of additional programs administered by the Office of Program Services, please see Table 5B or [Office of Program Services](http://www.dc.state.fl.us/orginfo/progsvc.html) on the Department of Corrections' website at <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/orginfo/progsvc.html>.

helper to more high-tech positions in computer programming and architectural drafting.

- ***Substance abuse treatment*** programs are provided in 45 institutions, 11 work camps, 25 work release centers, and 5 reception centers. As part of the department's recent overall reorganization, the Bureau of Substance Abuse Program Services has replaced the former five-level "tier" system with a new system consisting of three levels or "modalities."³¹ Modality 1 is an intensive four- to six-month outpatient program; Modality 2 is a more long-term residential therapeutic community program; and Modality 3 is an outpatient relapse prevention and transitional program.³² The department also has two dual diagnosis programs especially designed for inmates with psychological disorders as well as substance abuse problems. Each institution with a substance abuse program provides motivational groups for inmates who are waiting to be placed in a program and ongoing alumni groups for inmates who have completed Modality 1 or 2. The department contracts with private agencies for most of its substance abuse services.³³ The department recently implemented a new system for contracting with private substance abuse vendors based on five geographic areas or contract clusters. The department now contracts with a single vendor in each of the five clusters for Modality 1 and 2 services. The contracts are awarded through a competitive bidding process; vendors must meet specific performance criteria for their contracts to be renewed.
- ***Transition skills*** - Section 944.702, *Florida Statutes*, directs the department to provide all inmates with transition skills training prior to their release. The department meets this mandate for most inmates through a two-hour pre-release video. The department also provides a 100-hour transition and life skills program that is available in 14 institutions and three work-release centers. The 100-hour course covers topics such as job readiness, decision making, and money management.

Program funding

In Fiscal Year 2000-01 the Legislature appropriated the Office of Program Services \$64.5 million. General revenue funds account for approximately half of the office's total funding and trust funds cover the rest of the

³¹ The department's former tier system included a 12-week substance abuse education program. This type of program is still offered for youthful offenders at two facilities.

³² The term outpatient is used for Modality 1 because inmates in this program are housed with the general prison population. The Modality 2 program is based on a residential treatment model. Modality 2 inmates are housed in program dormitories separate from the general population.

³³ The department's Legislative Budget Request for 2001-02 recommends the replacement of 59 department substance abuse FTE with contracted staff. This change would result in all of the department's substance abuse programs being privatized with the exception of the department's two dual-diagnosis programs.

budget. (See Exhibit 13.) The largest category of trust fund dollars comes from the Inmate Welfare Trust Fund, consisting primarily of revenue from the sale of canteen goods to inmates and commissions paid to the department by companies that provide inmate telephone services.

Exhibit 13
General Revenue and Trust Funds Equally Support
the Office of Program Services

Funding Source	Fiscal Year 2000-01 (in millions)
General Revenue	\$ 32.7
Trust Funds	
Inmate Welfare Trust Fund	21.2
Grants and Donations Trust Fund	10.3
Operating Trust Fund	0.3
Total	\$64.5

Source: General Appropriations Act Fiscal Year 2000-01.

Program Performance

Correctional education and programs contribute to institutional security and increase public safety

Participation in educational, vocational, substance abuse treatment, and other programs reduces inmate idleness and promotes institutional security. Programs also play a major role in the rehabilitation of offenders by furthering their education, which in turn helps them find and keep employment after release. According to Department of Corrections' data, for example, inmates who complete education programs are 11% more likely to be employed than other inmates. Gainfully employed ex-offenders are more likely to remain out of the correctional system. Since 90% of prison inmates eventually will be released, programs are critical to the process of preparing inmates for return to society.³⁴

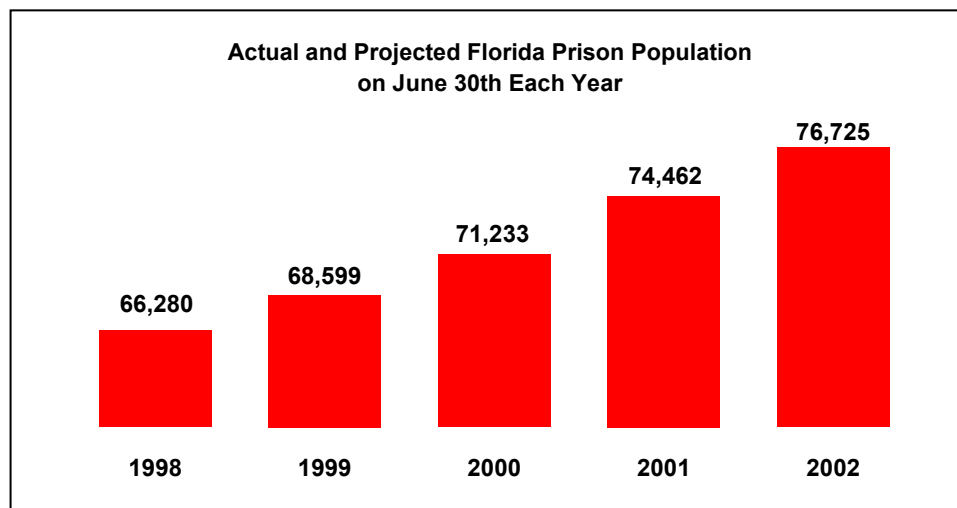
***Inmate idleness
threatens institutional
security***

As shown in Exhibit 14, Florida's prison population is increasing. In addition, inmates are becoming more violent and are serving longer sentences. As a result, tension and hostility in the correctional facilities are escalating and increasing the risks for correctional officers. According to corrections literature, inmate idleness is a contributing factor to

³⁴ *What Are Florida's Prisoners Doing While They Are Serving Time in the State Prison System?* Committee on Criminal Justice, The Florida Senate, Report No. 98-15, November 1998.

violence and institutional disturbances.³⁵ Therefore, reducing idleness among large number of inmates by keeping them constructively engaged is important for correctional employee safety.

Exhibit 14 Florida's Prison Population Is Increasing



Source: Florida Department of Corrections and Florida Criminal Justice Estimating Conference.

The Department of Corrections uses both work and program assignments to keep inmates occupied. On June 30, 2000, there were 55,476 inmates eligible for assignments, but only 44,995 existing full-time assignments were [available](#).³⁶ Since opportunities to significantly increase the assignments are very limited, programs are essential tools for addressing inmate idleness.³⁷ Approximately 13,000 inmates were assigned to educational and substance abuse programs. In addition, approximately 7,000 inmates participated in betterment programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous and wellness programs, and another 1,436 inmates were engaged as literacy and volunteer tutors, teacher aides, and law clerks.

Programs facilitate inmates' institutional adjustment

Programs also facilitate inmates' positive adjustment within the prisons and thereby foster institutional security. The number of major disciplinary reports offenders receive indicates their behavior and adjustment. The department reported in Fiscal Year 1999-2000 that inmates who completed GED, vocational, and other major programs had

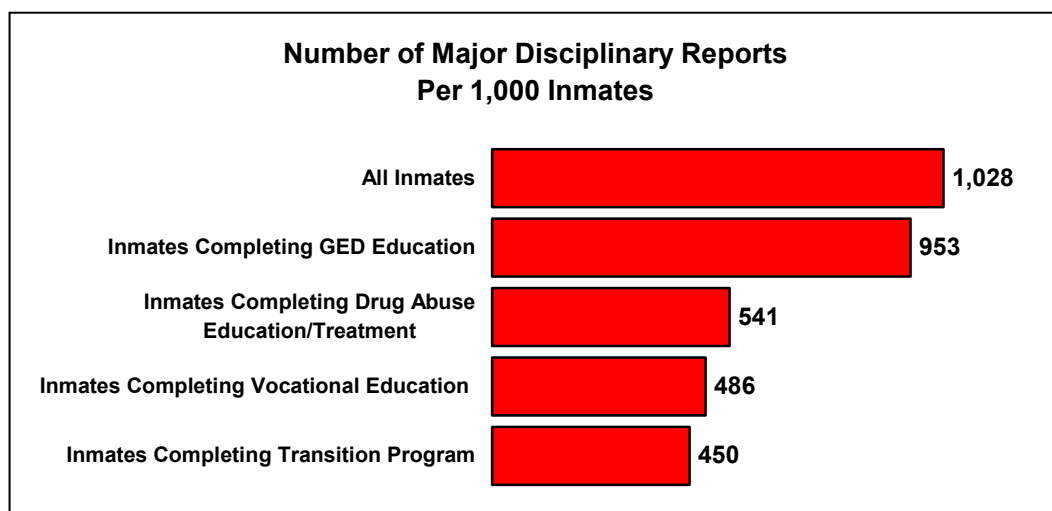
³⁵ *Follow-Up Report on the Inmate Welfare Trust Fund and Institution-Based Accounts Administered by the Department of Corrections*, OPPAGA [Report No. 96-46](#), February 1997.

³⁶ Approximately 12,000 inmates are not available for work assignments for reasons such as illness, travel, or custody level.

³⁷ Primary obstacles to expanding the work squad assignments inside or outside the fence are the increased cost of armed supervision, the limited types of work that can be performed by inmates, and low productivity of the work squads. Statutory restrictions on the form of prison industries allowed and the available space to locate them also hamper their growth and the associated inmate work placements.

a lower rate of disciplinary reports than the rate for all inmates.³⁸ (See Exhibit 15.) Inmates that receive disciplinary reports represent a significant cost to the state, as the department calculates that each disciplinary report carries an associated average cost of \$1,038.³⁹ According to department employees, once inmates are placed in programs their self-esteem increases. As their accomplishments are noted, their behavior improves, and they do not want to risk removal from the program for disciplinary reasons. Program participation therefore is an avenue to cost avoidance.

Exhibit 15
Programs Promote Inmates' Institutional Adjustment¹



¹ While the disciplinary report rate for GED participants is not as low as for other programs, it is about 7% better than the rate for all inmates.

Source: Florida Department of Corrections.

***Program completers
have lower recidivism
rates***

Programs also enhance public safety by reducing recidivism. National and department data show lower recidivism rates for inmates completing programs while incarcerated. Many correctional studies have established that training, education, and substance abuse treatment in prisons lead to increased post-release success in the labor market and to reduced recidivism.

- A New York Department of Correctional Services' study indicates that inmates who successfully completed the General Equivalency Diploma (GED) requirements while incarcerated recidivated at a lower rate than those who did not. The findings of this study show that 34% of inmates that earned a GED while incarcerated were

³⁸ Rate is the number of major disciplinary reports per 1,000 inmates.

³⁹ This amount represents administrative cost and the cost of extended release date due to loss of gain-time. Inmates can eventually earn enough gain-time to offset some or all of the long length of stay resulting from past disciplinary reports.

re-incarcerated, compared to 39.1% of those who did not earn a GED in prison.⁴⁰

- The Illinois Council on Vocational Education reported that vocational and academic program participants had higher employment and fewer arrests after release than non-participants. Also, the more education inmates received the higher the employment rate and lower crime rate they had.⁴¹
- The Federal Bureau of Prisons reports that inmates who completed residential drug abuse treatment programs were 73% less likely to be arrested for a new offense in the first six months after release than those who did not participate. The program participants were also 44% less likely to use drugs or alcohol than non-participants.⁴²
- The Florida Department of Corrections' research concluded that inmates released during Fiscal Year 1995-96 who earned a GED or completed substance abuse treatments were 5.4% less likely to recidivate than the remaining population. Inmates who earned vocational certificates were 8% less likely to recidivate.⁴³

By enhancing institutional safety and preparing inmates so that they can more successfully return to society, programs are an integral part of the department's public safety mission.

Program benefits translate into a reasonable return for the level of resources invested

Programs cost less than other aspects of the correctional system while providing major benefits to the Florida taxpayer. By reducing recidivism, programs enhance public safety and avoid the expense of incarcerating repeat offenders. By promoting inmates' successful reintegration into society, programs also contribute to the reduction of other taxpayer burdens, such as the cost of public assistance for former inmates and their families.

Florida invests considerably fewer resources in correctional education and inmate programs than it invests in other sectors of the correctional system. As shown in Exhibit 16, appropriations for correctional education and programs represents 4% of the department's total appropriations,

⁴⁰ "Does Correctional Education Have an Effect on Recidivism?" *Journal of Correctional Education*, Vol. 49, Issue 4, December 1998.

⁴¹ Anderson, D.B., *et al.*, "Correctional Education a Way to Stay Out: Recommendations for Illinois and a Report of the Anderson Study." Illinois Council on Vocational Education, 1988.

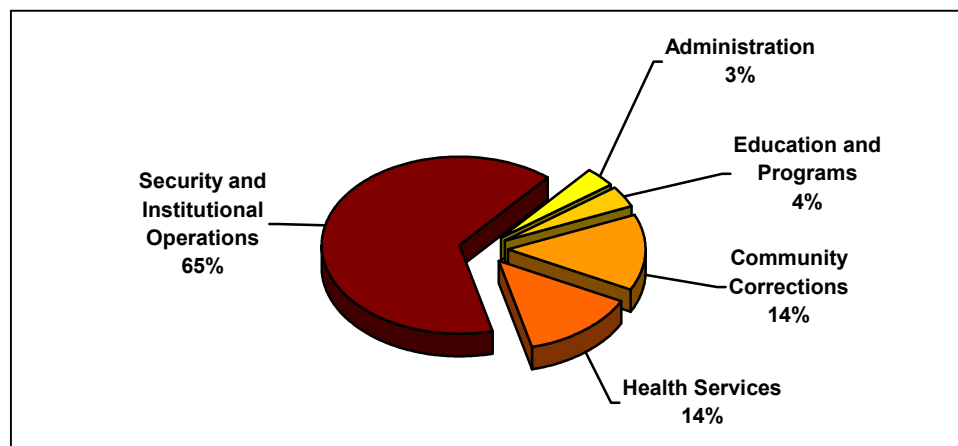
⁴² Rhine, E.E., editor, "Excellence in Corrections." American Correctional Association, 1998.

⁴³ *Preliminary Analysis of Inmate Programs upon Recidivism*. Draft. Bureau of Research and Data Analysis, Department of Corrections, April 2000.

significantly less than the amount for the department's other major areas of operation.

Exhibit 16

Programs Received 4% of the Department's Total Operating Budget

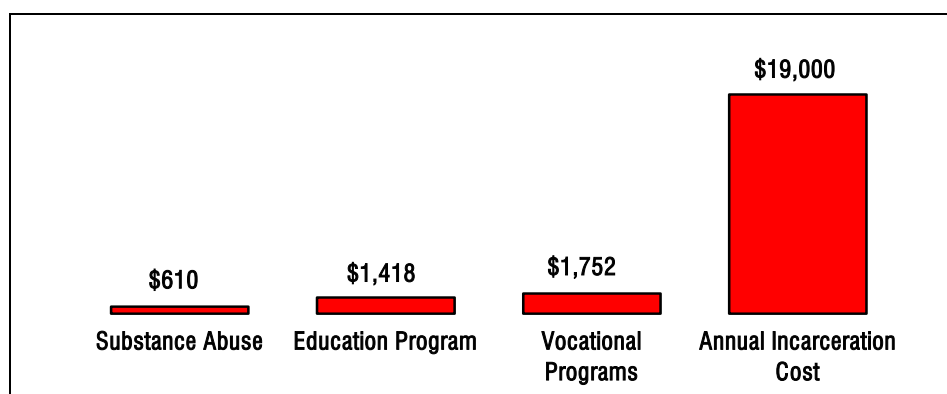


Source: General Appropriations Act Fiscal Year 2000-01.

On a per inmate basis, program expenditures are relatively low, when compared to the overall costs of an inmate's incarceration. The department's estimated cost per program participant for 1999-2000 ranged from \$610 for substance abuse programs to \$1,752 for vocational programs. It costs approximately \$19,000 to house an inmate in prison for one year. (See Exhibit 17.)

Exhibit 17

Expenditures Per Program Participant Are Low Compared to the Annual Cost of Incarceration



Source: Executive Office of the Governor, Recommended Budget for Fiscal Year 2000-01. The annual incarceration cost is based on an estimate provided by the Department of Corrections.

Correctional education costs compare favorably with school district costs

Teacher salaries provide a benchmark for comparing the costs of correctional education with school district costs. School district teacher salaries are generally higher than Department of Corrections teacher salaries. The department recently estimated the cost of contracting with local school districts for correctional education, using teacher salaries as the major cost factor. Due primarily to the salary differential, the department concluded that contracting with school districts would cost more than operating its own correctional education programs.⁴⁴ For example, the per teacher cost for Santa Rosa Correctional Institution is \$42,651, compared to \$53,582 and \$50,852 for academic and vocational teachers in Santa Rosa school district. The per teacher cost based on salaries and benefits at Everglades Correctional Institution is \$42,651, compared to \$68,087 for academic and vocational teachers in Dade County school district.

A similar benchmark is not available to assess the cost of the department's substance abuse treatment programs. The department uses a competitive bidding process to award contracts for its vendor-operated programs.⁴⁵ While competition among vendors may provide a mechanism for keeping costs down, it would be useful to compare the costs of Department of Corrections' contracted substance abuse treatment with the costs of contracted substance abuse services provided through other state agencies, such as the Department of Children and Families. Unfortunately, the two departments use different measures to report the cost of substance abuse treatment services. The use of comparable cost measures for similar services would help agencies assess their costs and give the Legislature critical information for making appropriations decisions.

Program benefits lead to lower taxpayer costs

Analysis of inmate outcomes for the past several years suggests that the state's investment in programs leads to lower taxpayer costs. Department data for inmates released in Fiscal Year 1993-94 show that inmates who completed education and substance abuse programs were less likely to receive public assistance and more likely to be employed than other inmates. Inmates who completed substance abuse programs were 36% more likely to be employed; inmates who completed academic or vocational programs were 11% more likely to be employed.

Department data for inmates released in Fiscal Years 1993-94 and 1995-96 show consistently lower recidivism rates for inmates who completed programs. For Fiscal Year 1995-96, for example, the recidivism rate for the 1,440 inmates who completed a GED was 26.6%, compared to 30.6% for inmates who did not complete a GED. This reduction in recidivism

⁴⁴ For the three institutions included in the department's cost comparison, the department estimates that it would cost \$548,905 more to contract with local school districts.

⁴⁵ For Fiscal Year 2000-01, 8 of the department's 87 programs are operated by department staff; the remaining programs are provided through contracts with private vendors or a combination of department and contract staff.

would translate to approximately 58 inmates not returning to prison; avoiding the cost of their re-incarceration would amount to an estimated \$1.1 million for one year.⁴⁶

Cost benefit analysis provides a method for determining if the value of program outcomes exceeds program costs. The Washington Legislature recently directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to conduct a cost benefit analysis of programs designed to reduce crime. The study compared per participant program costs with benefits to the taxpayer in terms of downstream criminal justice cost avoided.⁴⁷ The Washington study found that basic education programs for prison inmates realized a return of \$1.71. The return for in-prison vocational education was \$2.30 per dollar spent. These results are similar to the results of a study that assesses the costs and benefits of education programs for Florida inmates.

Studies show positive return for program investments

The Florida study tracks outcomes over a two-year period for inmates who completed education programs released during the 1993-94 fiscal year.⁴⁸ The study includes inmates' post-release earnings and an estimate of avoided incarceration costs in its analysis. It reports an approximate return of \$1.66 per \$1 invested in inmates' incarceration and program participation for the first year, and a return of \$3.20 for the second year. Due to limitations of the study's design, it cannot be determined what portion of this return can be attributed to programs. However, the study's conclusions lend support to the view that the state's investment in Department of Corrections education programs leads to lower public costs.

A significant number of inmates with identified educational and treatment needs do not participate in programs

The performance of the department's academic, vocational, and substance abuse programs has been mixed. On the one hand, inmates who successfully complete programs acquire skills that are critical to their re-integration into society. On the other hand, a significant number of inmates do not get these essential skills because they do not participate in or finish the programs they need. Without these skills, inmates pose a greater risk to public safety because they are more likely to re-offend.

⁴⁶ OPPAGA's estimate of cost avoidance was determined by multiplying the number of inmates who completed the program by both recidivism rates and subtracting the difference, resulting in 58 inmates who would have returned to prison at an annual incarceration cost of \$19,000 per inmate.

⁴⁷ *The Comparative Costs and Benefits of Programs to Reduce Crime*, Washington State Institute for Public Policy, June 1999.

⁴⁸ *Return on Investment for Correctional Education in Florida*, Florida Department of Corrections, June 1999. The study was conducted by Florida Tax Watch and the Center for Needs Assessment using a model they developed for Florida's Department of Labor and Employment Security to assess the benefits of the Job Partnership Training Act program.

Performance data indicate that programs can be effective at addressing inmates' skill deficits. To measure inmates' learning gains the department uses the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE). TABE test results for the past two years show an overall grade level score improvement of five months for an average of three months of instruction.⁴⁹ The department's adult basic education programs also perform well in the area of GED preparation. In 1997-98, the department achieved a 76% passage rate for inmates who took the GED exam, compared to the state rate of 70% and the national rate of 69%. The department's GED passage rate for 1998-99 was 77%. Data also indicate that the department's substance abuse programs reduce inmates' drug use. During 1995-96, the most recent year for which data are available, inmates who completed substance abuse treatment programs were 16% less likely to test positive for drug use.⁵⁰

Many inmates do not receive essential training

The department has been less successful at getting inmates into the programs they need.⁵¹ As a result, a significant number of inmates leave prison without having an opportunity to address their skill deficits, training, and treatment needs. In Fiscal Year 1999-2000, for example,

- approximately 65% of released inmates left with scores below the ninth grade literacy level;
- 1,215 inmates did not participate in the academic programs they needed prior to release;
- 3,986 inmates did not receive the vocational training they needed prior to release; and
- 8,760 inmates did not receive the substance abuse treatment services they needed prior to release.

Part of the department's challenge is assigning inmates to facilities that match their custody level and offer the appropriate program. In Fiscal Year 1999-2000, 38% of inmates identified as needing academic, vocational, or substance abuse programs were placed in facilities that did not have any of the programs they needed.

The department has taken steps to improve inmate placement in programs

The department has recently taken two steps that should improve the process of assessing inmates' program needs, assigning them to the appropriate facility and placing them in programs.

⁴⁹ A high proportion of inmates enter prison reading well below the sixth grade level; for these inmates, a five-month gain does not bring them to functional literacy. However, any improvement in basic literacy enables inmates to participate more successfully in other programs and acquire other essential skills.

⁵⁰ Unfortunately, prisons are not drug free because illegal substances can be smuggled into institutions and inmates find ways to manufacture "home-made" alcohol. Section 944.473, *F.S.*, directs the department to randomly select and test inmates for substance abuse. In 1993-94, 3.1% of inmates tested positive for drug use, compared to 2.6% for substance abuse program completers.

⁵¹ Inmates' program needs are determined through a screening and assessment process at the department's reception centers. Subsequent assessments are conducted whenever the inmate is transferred to a new facility, and at regularly scheduled intervals.

- A new policy mandates that inmates who meet specific criteria shall participate in substance abuse programs; and
- A new automated system ranks inmates for program placement based on a standardized assessment of their program needs.

Mandatory substance abuse program participation should lead to a more efficient use of program resources. The department reports that the policy has already had a positive impact on the utilization of program slots. Preliminary data show an increase in the number of programs operating at near or full capacity. In addition, research suggests that mandated substance abuse treatment is at least as effective as voluntary treatment.

While the department's new policy should produce benefits, it could be challenged, as it is not explicitly authorized by statute. The department made substance abuse program participation mandatory through a rule revision.⁵² Section 946.002, *Florida Statutes*, requires that all able-bodied inmates participate in either work or education programs, but there is no statute mandating inmates to participate in substance abuse treatment. In addition, American Correctional Association standards require that program participation and treatment for inmates be voluntary except where required by statute or law. The department is planning to make participation in education programs mandatory as well.⁵³

Without clear statutory authority, a policy of mandatory program participation could increase inmate grievances. We recommend that the Legislature consider revising s. 944.473, *Florida Statutes*, to eliminate any ambiguity concerning the department's authority to mandate participation in substance abuse programs. If the Legislature concurs with the department's plan to make participation in education programs mandatory, it should also consider revising s. 944.801, *Florida Statutes*.

***New ranking system
targets resources at
inmates with highest
need***

The department recently implemented its Priority Program Ranking System, an automated system to screen, prioritize, and place inmates in academic, vocational, and substance abuse programs.⁵⁴ The new system assigns inmates a rank based on an assessment of their program needs, rehabilitation potential, and forecasted release date. Inmates who place in the top 500 statewide receive the highest priority for assignment to

⁵² Chapter 33-507, *F.A.C.*, provides that effective July 1, 2000, inmates who meet the criteria established by the department shall be mandated to participate in substance abuse services when such services are available. Mandated inmates who refuse substance abuse treatment are subject to disciplinary actions which may include confinement and loss of gain-time. Inmates who refuse treatment also lose their eligibility for work release.

⁵³ Section 944.801, *F.S.*, mandates 150 hours of literacy education for inmates who test below the ninth grade level. The statute exempts certain inmates, such as those serving a life sentence or housed at a work camp.

⁵⁴ This action addresses deficiencies identified in previous OPPAGA reports on the department's inmate screening and assignment system. OAG Report No. [12225](#); and OPPAGA Report Nos. [94-26](#) and [96-64](#).

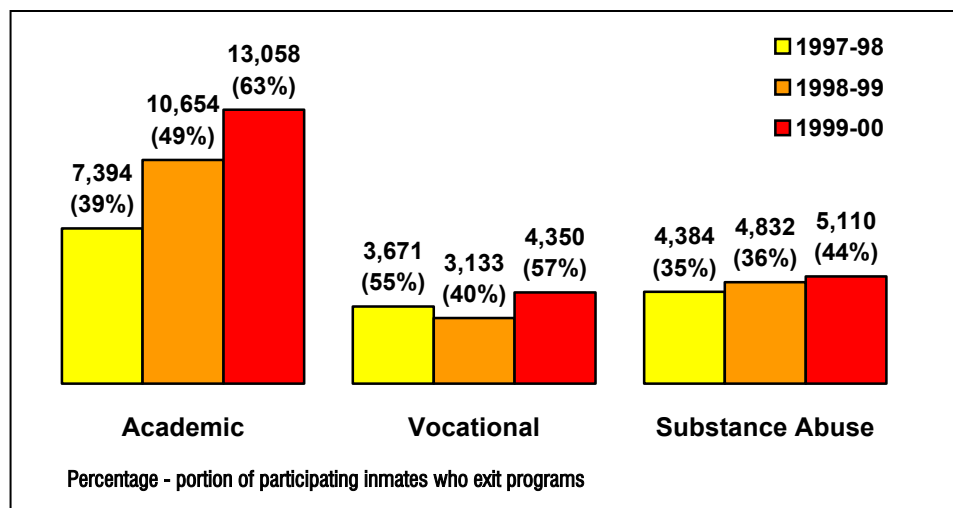
institutions with the programs they need and placement in these programs after they arrive. Institutions are also instructed to assign inmates ranked below the top 500 in order of their priority number, but may still make exceptions for inmates currently assigned to work squads or approved for transfer to a work release center.

The Priority Program Ranking System should increase program participation; however, even with the new system, at the current level of programming, a significant number of inmates are still likely to be released from prison without essential skills. To realize programs' potential to reduce recidivism and improve institutional safety through reduced idleness, the Legislature should consider whether it is cost-effective to increase programming for inmates. We recommend that the department provide the Legislature options for increasing levels of programming for education, vocational training, or substance abuse treatment, including associated costs and potential benefits. In assessing benefits, the department may wish to conduct multivariate analyses to determine whether combinations of programs provide additional benefits. The department should also take additional steps to use existing resources more efficiently by increasing program completion.

Thousands of inmates leave programs prior to completion

Program efficiency is undermined when scarce resources are invested in large numbers of inmates who are removed from programs before they have attained their educational, training, or treatment goals. The department has had difficulty addressing this problem and inmate attrition has remained unchecked. As shown in Exhibit 18, thousands of inmates exited academic, vocational, and substance abuse programs prior to completion during each of the past three fiscal years, representing 35% to 63% of the participants in each program area.

Exhibit 18
Thousands of Inmates Exit Programs Prior to Completion



Source: Department of Corrections.

Inmates are removed from programs for a variety of reasons. Inmates may be discharged from programs for bad behavior in class, and inmates may request permission to withdraw from programs for reasons of their own.⁵⁵ However, the major factor affecting program completion is inmate movement, an aspect of the corrections system over which the program has little control.

Analysis of exit data for the past three fiscal years clearly shows the significance of the impact of inmate movement on program completion. Since Fiscal Year 1997-98, the majority of inmates who did not complete their program left because they were released from prison, removed to meet a security or institutional need, or transferred to another facility. In Fiscal Year 1999-2000, for example, these reasons accounted for 59% to 76% of the inmates who exited academic, vocational, and substance abuse programs prior to completion.⁵⁶ (See Exhibit 19.)

⁵⁵ With the department's new mandatory policy for substance abuse programs, effective July 14, 2000, inmates who voluntarily withdraw may be disciplined.

⁵⁶ The impact of inmate movement on program completion during Fiscal Year 1999-2000 may have been accentuated by the process of department reorganization and consolidation discussed in Chapter 2 of this report.

Exhibit 19 Inmate Movement Accounted for Most Program Exits

Programs	Program Exits Prior to Completion	Removed for Security or Institutional Reasons		Released or Moved to Another Institution		Total
Academic	13,058	4,586	35%	4,342	33%	68%
Vocational	4,350	1,751	40%	1,563	36%	76%
Substance Abuse	5,110	1,293	25%	1,715	34%	59%

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Corrections Fiscal Year 1999-2000 data.

The impact of inmate movement on programs could be reduced

The department reports that over 200,000 inmate transfers took place during Fiscal Year 1999-2000. Inmates are constantly being moved throughout the correctional system to balance prison populations, maintain institutional security, and address organizational priorities, such as the consolidation of medical services discussed in Chapter 6. Transfers to meet these priorities necessarily take precedence over inmates' program needs; however, when decisions are made to move inmates for less essential reasons, program completion should be taken into account.

The bulk of inmate movement occurs as inmates work their way through the classification system and their custody levels change. Inmates may earn a "good adjustment transfer" to a facility closer to their home, be assigned to a work squad, or transferred to a work release center. This aspect of inmate movement has a profound impact on program completion because many inmates who are in programs are the type of inmate that is most eligible for these transfers. Program participants tend to be lower custody inmates, nearing the end of their sentences with few disciplinary referrals. As a result, programs, work squads, and work release centers frequently compete for the same inmates. A feature of the department's new Priority Program Ranking System may address this problem to some extent.

Inmates should be assigned to programs earlier in their sentences

The department has recognized the need to assign inmates to programs earlier in their prison terms. Placing inmates in programs during the last few years of their sentences intensifies the competition for eligible inmates between programs and other priorities of the correctional system. The new Priority Program Ranking System extends the "window" for priority program placement from less than 5 years before release to 5 to 10 years prior to release. This should gradually result in more inmates completing programs before they are assigned to work squads, become eligible for work release, or reach the end of their sentences.

The department should take three additional steps described below to ensure a higher rate of program completion and more efficient use of program resources.

- The department should periodically evaluate program exit data to monitor the impact of inmate transfers and end-of-sentence releases on program completion. The department should use this information to establish annual goals for the reduction of non-completion exits.
- The department should modify the Offender Based Information System (OBIS) to flag inmates who are in programs so that they are not scheduled for a good adjustment transfers without checking with program employees. If inmates are nearing program completion, their transfer should be delayed. According to department employees, good adjustment transfers could be delayed for three to four weeks to allow inmates to complete programs.
- The department should provide a mechanism for program employees to participate more directly and proactively in decisions to transfer inmates who are in programs. Correctional workers in Florida and other states cite communication between program and other institutional employees as a key to improving program completion rates. Cross-functional communication at the central office level is also essential. Currently, program and classification staff interact regarding decisions about inmate transfers primarily on an ad hoc basis or in response to problems as they arise.

Transition services safeguard public investments made in inmates; however, the majority of inmates get very little assistance

In Fiscal Year 1999-2000 the Department of Corrections released 24,317 offenders back to their communities. To help inmates successfully reintegrate, the department provides transition services. These services provide many benefits. Studies have shown that most inmates are likely to return to prison if they are not equipped with the skills they need to survive in the work world. Transition services can protect the state's investment in inmates who participated in academic and vocational programs, substance abuse treatment, and other programs by getting inmates ready for the workplace. Transition services can also promote public safety by assisting offenders with subsistence and employment needs, thereby reducing the number of inmates that commit new crimes.

As prison terms grow longer, inmates will face heightened adjustment problems upon returning to communities. Many offenders have difficulty finding employment after release because they lack job-seeking experience, a work history, and occupational skills. Employers are also reticent to hire individuals with criminal records. These circumstances seriously affect recidivism because unemployment is consistently associated with a high rate of re-offending.

Considerable evidence indicates that inmates who are taught employability and life skills (transition skills) prior to release and provided help with employment placement upon discharge have a better prospect of successfully re-entering the community and are less likely to commit new crimes.

- The California Department of Corrections reports a decline in its prison population, which the department credits to reduced recidivism that in turn is attributed to improved programs aimed at preventing ex-offenders from returning to jail. California reports that about 45 out of 100 inmates never return to prison. This number is approximately 50% more than it was a decade ago. Among the efforts recognized are employment preparation and job placement for paroled offenders.⁵⁷
- Texas' Project Re-Integration of Offenders offers job readiness, employability, and life skills training to inmates in prison, and extensive post-release services. It provides job placement services to nearly 16,000 ex-offenders a year. Sixty-nine percent of the program's participants found employment after release compared with 36% of non-program participants. Also, during the first year only 23% of high-risk program participants returned to prison, compared with 38% of the regular population. These notable results convinced the Texas Legislature to fund the program from general revenues after a start as a grant-supported pilot program.⁵⁸

***Transition services
required for all inmates;
however, few served***

Consistent with these findings, Ch. 944, *Florida Statutes*, states that: "It is the intent of the Legislature to provide persons released from incarceration from the Department of Corrections with certain fundamental resources in the areas of employment, life skills training, job placement, and access to as many support services as possible in order to appreciably increase the likelihood of the inmate's successful reentry into free society." It further directs the department to provide a standardized release orientation program to every eligible inmate. "The release orientation program instruction must include, but is not limited to

- (a) employment skills,
- (b) money management skills,
- (c) personal development and planning,
- (d) special needs,
- (e) community reentry concerns,
- (f) community reentry support, and
- (g) any other appropriate instruction to ensure the inmate's successful reentry into the community."

⁵⁷ "California Prison Population Shows Signs of Decline," *Correctional Education Bulletin*, Vol. 3, Issue 11, August 2000.

⁵⁸ "Texas's Project RIO," *Program Focus*, National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs.

The department provides pre- and post-release transition assistance. However, the level of services varies greatly and most offenders get very little assistance.

- **Pre-release.** Most inmates receive a pre-release orientation that minimally meets the legislative requirement. In Fiscal Year 1999-2000, the overwhelming majority of inmates, 84%, were shown a two-hour video on re-entry issues prior to their release.⁵⁹ In contrast, the other 16% received the 100-hour comprehensive course covering job readiness and life management skills.
- **Post-release.** At the time of release, the Department of Corrections gives all inmates \$100 and a bus ticket to their hometown. As part of the release process all inmates are provided a list of community service providers they can voluntarily contact; 12% of the inmates released in Fiscal Year 1999-2000 used this service. In addition, a small, select group of inmates who have earned a GED or vocational certificate during their latest incarceration period are eligible to participate in Project ReConnect services that offer actual job placement assistance to eligible inmates. A pre-apprenticeship employment and job-training program is also available to youthful offenders age 25 and younger through a network of community-based agencies. These two programs combined provided post-release assistance to 2% of the released inmates in the 1998-99 fiscal year.

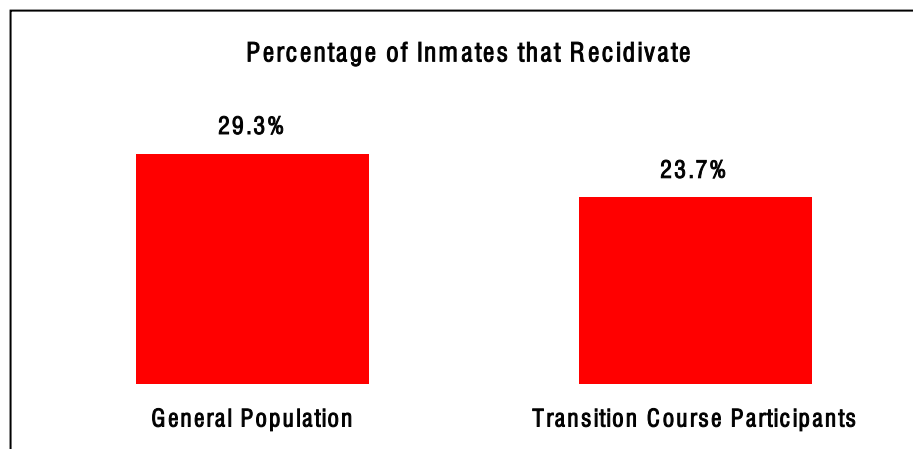
More successful transitions can translate into fewer inmates returning to prisons and a substantial cost avoidance. Inmates who participate in the 100-hour transition course have a better prospect of successful re-entry into the community. The department's preliminary recommitment data for the 100-hour transition course completers show that these inmates are more successful after release than those who do not participate. As shown in Exhibit 20, a department recidivism study of the general inmate population shows the recidivism rate for inmates who completed the 100-hour transition course was reduced by 5.6%.⁶⁰ However, only 16% of the inmates released received the benefits of the comprehensive transition course in Fiscal Year 1999-2000. Failure to provide transition support puts the state's return on its investment in inmates' rehabilitation and the public safety at risk.

⁵⁹ Department staff report that discussion following the video is optional.

⁶⁰ The Department of Corrections defines the standard recidivism rate as the percentage of inmates who within two years of release commit any crime that leads to recommitment or community supervision (technical violations are not counted). The 29.3% recidivism rate is based on all inmates released since Fiscal Year 1993-94.

Exhibit 20

Transition Participants Have Lower Recidivism



Source: Department of Corrections data.

There are various options to increase inmates' access to transition services by augmenting either pre-release or post-release services. Since inmates are more likely to be reached and engaged while incarcerated rather than after release, a focus could be placed on expanding the 100-hour transition course with its curriculum of employment and life skills. A combination of the transition course expansion with the existing voluntary post-release programs could facilitate better inmate adjustment to the community without recidivism.

\$3.1 million net cost avoidance is possible

The cost of an expansion might be recovered by possible cost avoidance. The department provided the 100-hour transition instruction to 3,776 inmates in Fiscal Year 1999-2000 at the cost of approximately \$0.5 million, supported largely by federal funds. The department recently planned to expand this program and provide instruction at another 14 institutions, but failed to obtain renewed federal grant for funding it. Based on the department's past slot utilization record, OPPAGA projects that expanding the program to 14 additional prisons as planned would serve 3,360 additional inmates annually, at the approximate added cost of \$450,000. If the recidivism rate of these inmates were to drop by 5.6 percentage points, then 188 fewer inmates would return to prison within two years. As suggested by the department's data, the state could realize \$3.1 million net cost avoidance for each year that those released offenders live in the community rather than in prison.⁶¹ While expanding the program the department can also accumulate additional data on program effectiveness. If this data demonstrate a constant recidivism reduction, the Legislature could consider funding the 100-hour transition skills course to include all releasees and increase the amount of cost avoidance.

⁶¹ Estimate is based on \$19,000 annual incarceration cost per inmate for 188 inmates less \$450,000 program cost.

Table 5A

Statutory Requirements for Program Evaluations and Justification Reviews

Section 11.513(3), *Florida Statutes*, provides that OPPAGA Program Evaluation and Justification Reviews shall address nine issue areas. Our conclusions on these issues as they relate to Education and Programs are summarized below.

Issue	OPPAGA Conclusions
The identifiable cost of the program	The approved operating budget for Fiscal Year 2000-01 is \$64.5 million. This amount represents approximately 4% of the department's total operating budget. Education and Programs activities are funded equally by general revenue and trust funds and grants. The largest category of trust fund dollars (\$21.1 million) comes from the Inmate Welfare Trust Fund.
The specific purpose of the program, as well as the specific public benefit derived therefrom	<p>The purpose of Education and Programs is to provide incarcerated offenders with training and treatment to promote their institutional adjustment and support their return to society as productive, law-abiding citizens.</p> <p>Criminal justice research and Department of Corrections data show that programs contribute to lower rates of recidivism. By helping to reduce recidivism, programs enhance public safety and avoid the cost of incarcerating repeat offenders. By promoting inmates' successful reintegration into society, programs also help reduce other burdens on the taxpayer; inmates who complete education programs are more likely to be employed and less likely to be on food stamps and other forms of public assistance.</p>
Progress towards achieving the outputs and outcomes associated with the program	<p>Participation and completion rates are key indicators of program performance and efficiency. In most program areas participation and completion rates have declined since Fiscal Year 1998-99. Progress in meeting performance-based budget (PB2) standards for these important measures has been mixed. In Fiscal Year 1999-2000 the participation and completion rates for mandatory literacy and transition skills nearly met or exceeded PB2 standards. The participation rate for inmates identified as needing the mandatory literacy program was 75%; the completion rate was 50%. Transition skills had a 99% participation rate and completion rate of 81%. GED and vocational programs did not perform as well, failing to meet the standards for these measures. The GED participation rate was 68% and the completion rate was 11%. For vocational programs the rates were 52% for participation and 30% for completion. The participation rate for inmates identified as needing substance abuse treatment was 33%, below the standard of 45%. The percentage of participants completing substance abuse programs was 34%.</p> <p>"The percentage of inmates placed in a facility that provides at least one of the inmate's primary program needs" is another important measure of program efficiency. This rate has also declined since Fiscal Year 1998-99. The percentage of inmates placed at a facility meeting at least one of their primary program needs in Fiscal Year 1999-2000 was 62%, well below the standard of 75% established by the department.</p>

Issue	OPPAGA Conclusions
<p>An explanation of circumstances contributing to the state agency's ability to achieve, not achieve, or exceed its projected outputs and outcomes, as defined in s. 216.011, <i>F.S.</i>, associated with the program</p>	<p>According to the department's Long Range Program Plan for Fiscal Years 2001-02 through 2005-06, the major factors contributing to low program participation and completion rates are vacant teacher and teacher aide positions and competing priorities for inmate placement. OPPAGA's analysis underlines the impact of competing institutional priorities by showing that large numbers of inmates leave programs prior to completion because they are transferred to another facility, released from prison, or removed from programs to meet security or institutional needs.</p> <p>The decline in the percentage of inmates at facilities that provide at least one of their primary program needs is due in large part to inadequacies of the prior system for selecting and assigning inmates as noted in previous OPPAGA reports. The department's new Priority Program Ranking System should address these deficiencies.</p>
<p>Alternative courses of action that would result in administering the program more efficiently and effectively</p>	<p>The provision of educational and substance abuse treatment services to inmates clearly pertains to the mission of the department to protect the public and rehabilitate offenders.</p> <p>Education and Programs should continue to be a centralized function under the Department of Corrections. We did not identify any compelling reason to transfer the administration of correctional education to individual school districts or to another entity. Where districts are responsible for juvenile justice education accountability has suffered, and as the department's comparison of teacher salaries indicates, it would be more costly. Substance abuse services are provided primarily through contracts with private vendors. The department's new "cluster contracting" system should enable the department to administer and monitor its contracted substance abuse programs more effectively. The department has proposed replacing 59 FTE department positions with contracted workers in Fiscal Year 2001-02; this change would result in only 2 of the department's 87 programs being staffed with department employees.</p> <p>A number of steps would increase program effectiveness and efficiency. To ensure a higher rate of completion and more efficient use of resources, we recommend that the department take the actions described below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the impact of routine transfers and end-of-sentence releases on program completion. • Set benchmarks/goals for reduction of non-completion exits due to routine transfers and end-of-sentence releases. • Modify current database to automatically flag if an inmate about to be scheduled for routine transfer is in a program nearing completion. • Provide a mechanism for program employees to participate more directly and proactively in decisions to transfer inmates who are in programs. <p>We concur with recent department initiatives to use program resources more efficiently.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Priority Program Ranking System emphasizes placing inmates in programs earlier in their sentences (5-10 years remaining vs. 5 years), reduces competition for eligible inmates between programs and work squads/work release centers, and establishes clear priorities for program placement. • The department's new policy of mandatory substance abuse program participation increases program participation and targets resources at inmates with most severe substance abuse problems.

Issue	OPPAGA Conclusions
The consequences of discontinuing the program	<p>The program should be continued. Elimination of this program would have serious consequences adversely affecting institutional security by increasing inmate idleness. If programs were eliminated inmate idleness could not be addressed through more work assignments, as they cannot be increased without significant added costs.</p> <p>Not providing education and training to offenders would jeopardize their post-release success. Ex-offenders returning to communities without any appreciable improvement in their education or employment skills would threaten public safety.</p>
Determination as to public policy, which may include recommendations as to whether it would be sound public policy to continue or discontinue funding the program, either in whole or in part	<p>The program contributes to institutional security and public safety and should be continued. The program provides a reasonable return for the level of resources invested. When inmates returning to the community receive adequate transition skills training and assistance, this investment is built on and protected.</p> <p>By expanding the pre-release transition program to 14 additional institutions, the state could possibly realize a net cost avoidance of \$3.1 million. While expanding the program, the department can also accumulate additional data on program effectiveness. If these data demonstrate a constant recidivism reduction, the Legislature could consider funding the 100-hour transition skills course to include all releasees and increase the amount of cost avoidance.</p>
Whether the information reported pursuant to s. 216.03(5), <i>F.S.</i> , has relevance and utility for the evaluation of the program	<p>Participation and completion rates provide valid measures of program efficiency. However, OPPAGA agrees with the department's recommendations for changes to these measures to increase their usefulness. The rates for the GED program participation and completion should be separated from the rates for adult basic education.</p> <p>The department's new mandatory program participation policy and priority program ranking system should increase program participation and assign inmates to programs in a more efficient manner; the measures and standards related to program participation and inmate placement should be changed accordingly.</p>
Whether state agency management has established control systems sufficient to ensure that performance data are maintained and supported by state agency records and accurately presented in state agency performance reports	<p>Current performance data are reasonably complete and reliable. The Office of Program Services has addressed the deficiencies noted in the Inspector General's audit of Fiscal Year 1998-99 measures, <i>Performance-Based Budgeting Audit Report, No. 99007</i>. For example, the office has provided documentation for the methodology used to record, calculate, and report performance data, resulting in improved data reliability.</p>

Source: OPPAGA analyses.

Table 5B

Description of Additional Programs Administered by the Office of Program Services

The Office of Program Services offers a wide array of educational opportunities for offenders in addition to academic and vocational education, substance abuse treatment, and transition skills.

Programs	Descriptions
Library Services	General library programs provide resources to permit inmates to achieve functional literacy and access current information and to promote reading. The law library programs provide materials and services necessary to secure access to the courts and law library collections.
Even Start	The Even Start Program is an intergenerational family literacy program that includes adult basic education, early childhood education and parenting skills, and a parent-child visiting program inside the facilities.
Distance Education/Corrections Distance Learning Network (CDLN)	Using satellite and two-way video-conferencing technologies CDLN provides educational programs for offenders. As part of distance learning opportunities, the federal STARS program through the Justice Distance Learning Consortium offers distance learning and multimedia technology to provide educational programming to youthful offenders.
Project ReConnect	<p>Project ReConnect is a program that provides post-release job placement services to ex-offenders who have completed either a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) or vocational education programs while in prison. It is also a community outreach project that brings potential employers into the institutions through speaking engagements and activities such as job fairs.</p> <p>Additionally, through a Community Transition Grant for Youthful Offenders, Project Re-Connect places youthful (25 years old and younger) offenders leaving the prisons into pre-apprenticeship programs. The program pays registration and tuition fees for the offenders and purchases tools, books, and other work-related items.</p>
Wellness Education	This program provides formal training in wellness education in all major institutions. This training includes fitness safety, tobacco cessation and other learning activities that promote physical well-being.
Specialized Institutional Services	The department provides a variety of programs and services designed for specific inmate populations including females, elderly inmates, and youthful offenders.
Chaplaincy	The chaplaincy program is responsible for addressing religious and spiritual concerns, coordinating services, and providing pastoral care and faith-based programming to all the offenders. Chaplains work with all faith groups in providing worship and other religious opportunities, crisis notification, orientation, visitation with inmates, and interaction with offenders' families. The program oversees religious observances, religious studies, and other faith-based programs such as the Kairos Horizon Project.
Betterment Programs	Self-improvement or "betterment" programs aim at altering inmates' attitudes, beliefs, and ultimately their behavior. These volunteer-based opportunities include group participation in meetings such as the Alcoholic Anonymous, family counseling, anger management, and men helping men.

Source : Department of Corrections.

Health Services

Background

When offenders are sentenced to prison, the federal courts have directed that the state becomes responsible for providing them health care. Inmate health care includes physical, dental, and mental health services, from examinations upon admission to prison to routine and emergency care throughout incarceration.

The department provides routine and emergency health care

Inmates entering the prison system at the department's reception centers receive several health care examinations. These include a complete physical, any needed laboratory tests and X-rays, a visual dental examination and, when determined necessary by a dentist, X-rays and a treatment plan to correct existing problems. In addition, inmates receive a mental health examination, which includes testing and an interview by mental health staff to determine their current psychological functioning level. Using the results of these examinations, health services staff classify each inmate by his or her physical and mental capability for prison work assignments. In Fiscal Year 1999-2000, health services screened 25,743 incoming inmates.

The department provides necessary routine and emergency medical care to inmates throughout their term of incarceration. Inmates who have been identified as having a chronic medical condition, such as diabetes, asthma, hypertension, or seizures, are scheduled for routine follow-up visits with doctors at intervals not to exceed 90 days. The department operates a 157-bed hospital at the North Florida Reception Center and a mobile surgical unit. Medical staff at these locations perform orthopedic, colorectal, ear-nose-throat, podiatry, and urology surgery. Whenever possible, inmates are transported from prisons throughout the state to the department hospital for treatment because it is more economical and safer for agency medical staff to treat them there. Inmates who require consultations with medical specialists for care not readily available within the prison system are transported to community physicians or hospitals for treatment. When necessary, emergency care is provided by the closest hospital emergency room. The department reports that in Fiscal Year 1999-2000, medical staff performed 1,900 surgeries at the hospital and the mobile unit.

Program funding

For Fiscal Year 2000-01 the Legislature appropriated the Office of Health Services \$227 million and 2,016 FTE positions to care for a projected 73,060 inmates. (See Exhibit 21.)⁶² This allocation represents 13.7 cents of every dollar provided to the Department of Corrections, or approximately \$3,109 per inmate for the year. The provision of health care for inmates is a state responsibility; with few exceptions prisoners are not eligible for federal assistance.⁶³

Exhibit 21

General Revenue Funds Most Health Services

Funding Source	Fiscal Year 2000-01 (in millions)
General Revenue	\$ 226.8
Grants and Donations Trust Fund	0.3
Total	\$227.1

Source: Fiscal Year 2000-01 Appropriations Act.

Program Performance

Correctional health care is influenced by 21 years of litigation

Florida's delivery of correctional health care has been largely influenced by 21 years of litigation and court oversight of inmate health services stemming from a class action lawsuit that originated in 1972.⁶⁴ The suit sought to ensure that security officers would no longer make health care decisions and that prisoners would not be involved in providing health care services. In 1985, a court-appointed survey team observed that the department exhibited "systematic indifference" to inmate medical needs.

Two major actions led to the eventual resolution of this lawsuit.

- The Legislature created the position of assistant secretary for Health Services, with line authority over health services staff within the prisons and responsibility for all correctional health care issues. The assistant secretary heads the Office of Health Services, which provides administrative support. The creation of the assistant secretary

⁶² This is an average of the monthly population projection of the Criminal Justice Estimating Conference for the 2000-01 fiscal year.

⁶³ For example, inmates that are veterans are eligible for treatment in a Veterans' Administration hospital, but the state must transport them there and guard them during their stay; these requirements make it impractical for the state to use these federal services in most cases.

⁶⁴ Costello v. Wainwright 430 U.S. 325, 51 L.Ed. 2nd 372, 97S.Ct. 1191 (1977), 506.

position and this office placed medical professionals in direct charge of all medical decisions within the prisons.

- The Legislature created the Correctional Medical Authority (CMA) to provide an ongoing independent review of the department's provision of health care services. The CMA, which is housed in the Department of Health, is composed of a nine-member board of physicians and health care specialists that are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. CMA staff, together with teams of community health care consultants, conduct periodic reviews of health services at department prisons. The consultants review inmate health care files and prison policies and procedures, interview medical staff and inmates, and generally assess the appropriateness of the care provided. Deficiencies are reported to the department, which must take corrective action. CMA is required to survey each prison at least once every three years.

***Independent health
care oversight is
needed***

These actions led to a stipulated final judgment that terminated federal court oversight in 1993.⁶⁵ A key to the final court settlement was recognition that the CMA would continue to monitor the department's health care delivery system. At the time the settlement agreement was approved, the court expressed concern that, without an entity such as the CMA, the correctional system might again allow inmate health care to fall below acceptable standards.

CMA and the Office of Health Services provide a good set of checks and balances to assure that appropriate inmate health care is provided. The Office of Health Services is responsible for providing adequate health care and containing costs. CMA review and oversight help ensure that the department does not go too far in containing health costs, possibly jeopardizing the provision of required services. Our review of the Health Services Program assessed both quality of care and cost containment efforts.

The department's provision of health care appears to be adequate

The quality of inmate health care is assessed through several indicators. Although it is difficult to compare the quality of inmate health care to other populations or indices, the Correctional Medical Authority has found the department's efforts to be adequate. A comparison of Florida's reported inmate suicide rate to the nationally reported rate shows the department's rate is among the nation's lowest. Finally, the percentage of inmate health care grievances that are upheld is very low, indicating that policies and procedures are meeting inmate needs.

⁶⁵ Costello, et al. v. Singletary 147 FRD 258 (The name of the action changed to reflect the Secretary of the Department of Corrections at the time of the settlement.)

The Florida Legislature has directed the Correctional Medical Authority to determine whether health care standards conform to the standard of care generally accepted in the professional health community at large. However, the standards are not always clear. There can be legitimate differences of opinion on the provision of health care services among providers and evaluators of health services, and CMA has not developed a set of minimum mandatory standards such as those established by the American Correctional Association or the National Commission on Correctional Health Care. The executive director of the CMA reports that they are in the process developing standards that will be implemented in early 2001.

Florida's inmate suicide rate is lower than the national average

In its 1998-99 fiscal year report, the CMA determined that the department did demonstrate an adequate structure for the delivery of health care services, with some exceptions in the area of management of suicidal/self-injurious offenders.⁶⁶ The exceptions pertained to suicides by two female inmates in 1998. In response to these suicides, the department implemented changes in the way potential suicides are handled, including requiring any inmate on suicide watch to be housed in a medical isolation unit or in a medically supervised area, clarifying the responsibility for supervising suicidal inmates, reassigning prison inspectors, and requiring that the Florida Department of Law Enforcement be involved in the investigation of any suicide. Also, Florida's suicide rate for calendar year 1998 (the latest available national data) was 8.9 per 100,000 inmates while the national average was 16.6. This indicator reflects the department's effectiveness as compared to all other states and the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Another measure of program performance is the number of inmate grievances filed that pertain to health care and the number of these grievances that are upheld. Exhibit 22 reflects that while the number of medically related grievances is increasing, the percentage that is upheld is generally declining. This is an indication that the department is providing adequate health services to inmates and that when there is a question about the delivery of services, there is a process for recognizing and correcting the situation.

⁶⁶ *Report on the Health Care Delivery of the Florida Department of Corrections 1998-1999*, State of Florida Correctional Medical Authority, December 1999. This is the most current report available as of October 24, 2000.

Exhibit 22
Grievances Are Increasing, But Fewer Are Being Upheld

Fiscal Year	Total Health Care Grievances	Percentage Increase	Number Upheld	Percentage Upheld
1995-96	3,322		128	3.9%
1996-97	3,604	8.5%	109	3.0%
1997-98	4,081	13.2%	135	3.3%
1998-99	4,668	14.4%	125	2.7%
1999-00	4,876	17.0%	84	1.7%

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Corrections data.

Inmate health care costs appear reasonable

Identifying appropriate cost standards is hampered by a lack of comparability. However, on the basis of per capita cost trends, it appears that the department is providing health care at a reasonable cost to the state.

The department's health care costs are not directly comparable to other private or public populations. The health care backgrounds of most inmates are poor. Due to unhealthy life styles, they age before their time; at age 50, inmates are considered medically elderly. As a result, data for this population cannot be directly compared to other groups who age more normally. This limits the relevance of comparisons using medical consumer price indexes. Unfortunately, it is also very difficult to compare Florida's inmate health care costs to those of inmates in other states. State prison populations vary as to the incidence of expensive ailments such as HIV/AIDS, and the states use different methodologies to provide health care services and maintain health care costs.

Because of these considerations, the most appropriate way to assess efficiency is by comparing the department's health care costs over time. This approach focuses on the department's ability to manage costs. As shown in Exhibit 23, the inmate population grew by 6%, while Health Services expenditures grew by 15%, and the number of health care FTE positions decreased by 18% during the period 1996-97 through 1999-2000.

Exhibit 23
Inmate Health Care Costs Are Increasing While Staffing Levels Are Decreasing

Fiscal Year	Health Services Expenditures	Approved FTEs	Number of Inmates
1996-97	\$205,046,104	3,067	61,656
1997-98	220,402,224	2,986	63,081
1998-99	229,529,656	2,836	63,334
1999-00	235,600,916	2,494	65,501
2000-01	Not yet available	2,016	71,233 ¹

¹ The figures for 1996-97 through 1999-00 are based on average daily population. The figure for 2000-01 is as of June 30, 2000.

Source: Florida Department of Corrections, Office of Health Services.

Though health costs increased, the per diem rate declined

According to the department, health care costs have increased despite lower staffing costs because of costs for drugs and illnesses such as AIDS. Despite this, the department's per diem rate fell last year. In contrast, other medical indexes show increasing health care costs. (See Exhibit 24.)

Exhibit 24
Inmate Health Care Costs Declined Last Year as Other Medical Indexes Increased

Fiscal Year	Department		Consumer Price Index (CPI)		
	Per Diem	Rate of Increase (Decrease)	Rate of Increase	Medical Care Increase	Medical Services Increase
1996-1997 ¹	\$9.11	5.9	2.3	2.9	2.9
1997-1998	9.57	5.0	1.7	3.2	3.3
1998-1999	9.93	3.8	2.0	3.4	3.3
1999-2000	9.85	(1.0)	3.7	4.1	4.3

¹ Based on 1995-96 per diem of \$8.60.

Source: Florida Department of Corrections Office of Health Services and U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and OPPAGA calculations.

We conclude that the department's cost containment measures are working. The department is now proceeding with two efforts to reduce health care costs: consolidating inmates by medical need and privatizing of health care services in one entire region of the state. Both of these initiatives were recommended by OPPAGA in an earlier report. ⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Review of Inmate Health Services Within the Department of Corrections, [Report No. 96-22](#), November 27, 1996.

Health care consolidation should reduce costs

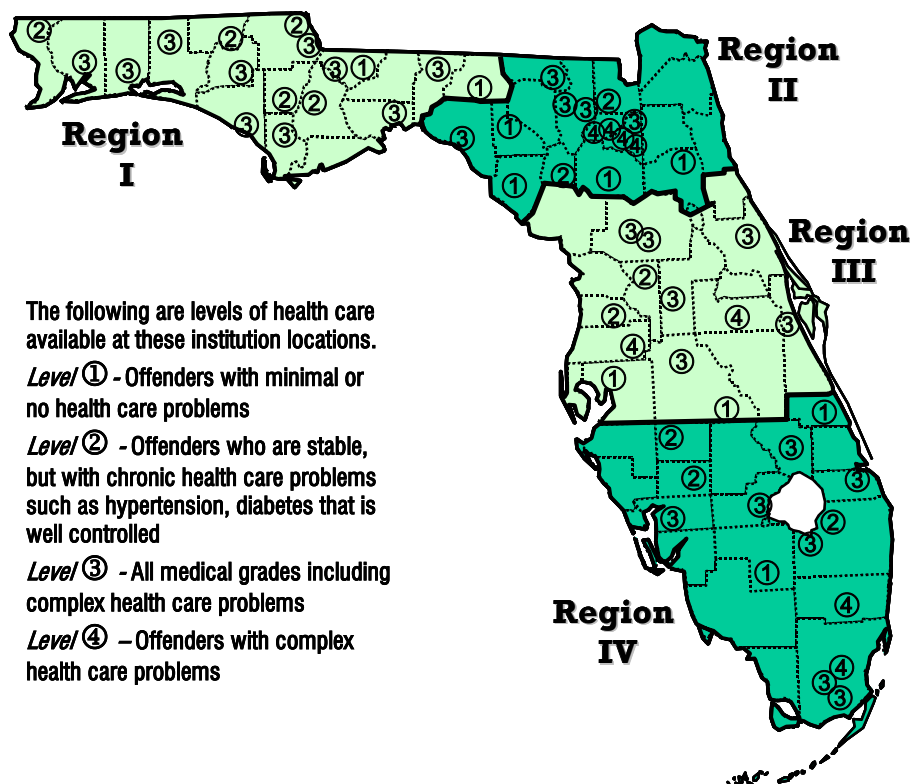
At legislative direction, the department formalized a health care consolidation plan in January 1998. The purpose of consolidation is to save money by grouping inmates that require minimal health care in institutions that will employ minimal health care staff, and inmates who require considerable medical attention in facilities that are staffed to provide that level of support. The consolidation effort is now well under way. To date, the inmates have been relocated, but medical staff are still being relocated. The new system consolidates inmates by disease, illness acuity, and medical complexity (for example, placing active HIV/AIDS inmates in one location). This model creates four levels of institutions, based on the type of inmates housed and their health care needs.

- **Level 1** - Offenders with minimal or no health care problems. These institutions may not have 24-hour coverage or a full-time physician. An advanced registered nurse practitioner will provide immediate care at most facilities. There will not be an infirmary. Seriously ill offenders will be transferred to another institution.
- **Level 2** - Offenders who are stable, but with chronic health care problems such as hypertension, diabetes that is well controlled, or amputees who require wheel chairs. There will be limited professional medical staff at these facilities, normally one physician and/or an advanced registered nurse. There will be 24-hour coverage on an as-needed basis. There will be an infirmary.
- **Level 3** - All medical grades including complex health care problems. Physician or advanced registered nurse on call 24 hours a day. Nursing coverage 24 hours a day. There will be an infirmary. Generally sick offenders with chronic physical or mental problems requiring a high level of care.
- **Level 4** - Offenders with complex health care problems. Medical staff at these locations will serve as gatekeepers for community-provided services. These institutions will be staffed and equipped to handle most highly acute, complex illnesses as well as custodial care. Planned interactions with medical schools and rotations of various students such as medical residents, nursing students, and psychology interns are expected.

Consolidation is underway

Mental health consolidation is also under way. The department reports dental consolidation was completed in the 1999-2000 fiscal year, and pharmacy consolidation was completed in October 2000. Mental health consolidation should be finalized in Fiscal Year 2000-01. We recommend that the department continue with consolidation, as these efforts should result in significant containment of health care costs. (See Exhibit 25.)

Exhibit 25
Health Care Is Being Consolidated Statewide;
However, There Are No Level 4 Prisons in Region I



Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Corrections data.

Privatizing health care in Region IV

The department has privatized many aspects of health services. For example, at five public prisons, private vendors have been contracted to provide all health services. At other institutions, the department contracts for medical personnel to perform services such as eye exams and specialty surgeries. The department also contains costs by negotiating rates for inmates that must be treated in hospital emergency rooms. In an earlier report, OPPAGA recommended that the department privatize health services in one entire region of the state so that the Legislature could determine whether such an approach would lead to cost savings.⁶⁸

Consequently, the other major initiative that is changing the way the department delivers health care services is the effort to contract for all

⁶⁸ *Review of Inmate Health Services Within the Department of Corrections*, [Report No. 96-22](#), November 27, 1996.

health care services in the Department of Corrections Region IV; this includes 12 major institutions and related facilities. In Ch. 2000-171, *Laws of Florida*, the Legislature directed the department to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to “secure one or more private vendors to provide the minimal constitutionally adequate level of health care to inmates at a cost savings when compared to the department’s actual Fiscal Year 1999-2000 health care expenditures.”

The contract should be awarded in December

The department has issued the RFP in accordance with its September 1, 2000, deadline and anticipates awarding the contract in December 2000, and executing a contract by January 23, 2000. The [RFP](#) groups the 12 major institutions and their related facilities into two clusters, with the east cluster comprising 7 institutions and the west with 5. Potential vendors may bid on providing services in one or both clusters.⁶⁹ While vendors are required to provide health services in accordance with minimal constitutionally adequate levels of care, legislative proviso language directed that staffing levels not be specified. However, the contractor will be required to provide institutional health care coverage 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Potential contractors will be completely and totally responsible for the cost of all health care delivered to inmates, and vendor liability will not be limited to any maximum cost per inmate.

The privatization of Region IV’s health care will provide the Legislature a good basis for determining if privatization is cheaper and more effective and should be expanded. Any assessment of cost-savings realized by privatization should take into account the costs of required oversight by the department and the Correctional Medical Authority.

The department needs to collect information throughout each of the next five years to allow the Legislature to make a valid comparison of the cost and effectiveness of the department and a private health care vendor. The department’s contract with the private vendor should specify the information to be collected. Data should include information such as the rate of health care grievances filed and upheld, the rate of suicides, per diem costs, and the rate of mortality reviews that identify inappropriate care. We recommend that the department take steps to assure that the information necessary to make this important comparison is collected.

The department needs to address crisis care

Institutions that do not have appropriate treatment facilities and little or no mental health staff must transfer inmates who become suicidal or have mental health crises. Inmates in crisis are sent to crisis stabilization units, which are staffed and physically designed to prevent suicide or self-injurious behavior. Inmates in acute crises are first transferred to a crisis

⁶⁹ Website address for the Department of Corrections’ Request for Proposals document: <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/oth/rfp/index.html> or <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/oth/rfp/7342-1.pdf>.

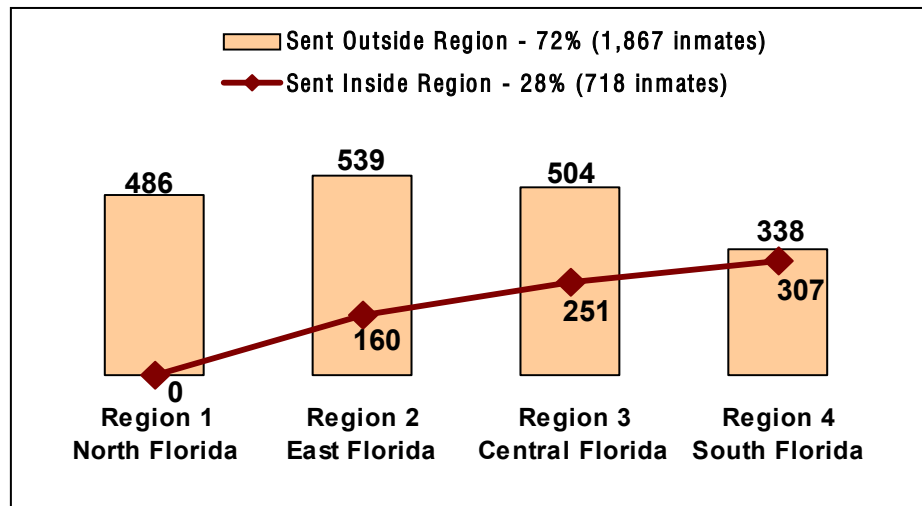
stabilization unit that provides intensive monitoring and until they have progressed in treatment, when they may then be moved to a transitional care unit where monitoring is less intensive. Inmates who are not able to function in the general population, possibly because of mental retardation or poor coping skills, but who are not having a crisis, may be transferred directly to a transitional care unit. The department maintains a total of 174 crisis stabilization unit beds and 591 transitional care units.

Inmates in crisis are transported individually by security officers rather than on department buses because of the need to get them quickly to an appropriate treatment setting. Depending on the custody level of the inmate, this type of transport could entail up to three correctional officers and two vehicles if an escort is required. Those transferred to transitional care units are considered routine transfers, which means they are usually transported on the department's regularly scheduled buses.

Last year 2,752 inmates were transferred for crisis mental health care

In Fiscal Year 1999-2000, the department transferred 2,585 inmates to crisis stabilization units and transitional care units. According to the department, the transfers to crisis stabilization units were individual transfers except in cases when two or more inmates were being transported from one region to another on the same day, in which case the department made an effort to coordinate travel. As shown in Exhibit 26, 100% of inmates in North Florida (Region I) were transferred outside their region, sometimes all the way to South Florida (Region IV).

Exhibit 26
Many Inmates Are Transferred Out of Their Regions



Note: Exhibit information is for male inmates transferred during the period July 1, 1999, through June 30, 2000.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Corrections data.

Transporting inmates in mental health crisis is expensive

Health service staff report that transfer destinations depend on the availability of beds, and there are too few beds in some areas of the state. For example, Exhibit 26 reflects that of 486 mental health transfers from Region I, 142 were transported all the way to Region IV, a conservatively estimated nine-hour drive. The practice of transferring inmates in crisis is expensive; our analysis indicates transfer costs for inmates in crisis amounts to at least \$346,000 in correctional officer time.

Transfers also affect safety, by taking up to three correctional officers away from their institutional work assignment both during the transport and after, when their travel overtime precludes them from completing their previously scheduled 40-hour week at the institution. This shift of employees can reduce security at the institution and is also potentially dangerous to the community, since department employees agree that inmates outside a secure compound are most likely to escape. To date there have been no escapes during mental-health transports.

According to department employees, inmates may also be transferred across the state in an effort to keep all crisis stabilization units and therapeutic care units equally full so that these resources can be maximized. Also, centers must operate where the department can provide appropriate personnel. Office of Health Services administrators report that they have difficulty in maintaining psychiatric and psychological workers in north Florida (Region I), thereby making the operation of crisis stabilization units in the region difficult. However, it should be noted that until August 1999, the Correctional Mental Health Institute, which housed the highest and most severely mentally ill inmates, was located in that area on the grounds of the Florida State Hospital at River Junction Correctional Institution, and there were adequate and appropriate workers to maintain that 100-bed facility. Since there are 726 close-management beds in Region I, the need for crisis stabilization beds will likely be a recurring problem in this area.

The department needs to assess the cost-effectiveness of its transport policy

Because costly, long-distance transfers are occurring frequently, the department needs to assess whether it would be more cost-effective to relocate or open additional crisis stabilization care units for inmates in mental health crises than to continue transporting them. This analysis should include

- origin of inmates sent to the beds;
- to which unit the inmate was transferred;
- what the occupancy rates were for any units that were bypassed in transporting to the receiving unit; and
- costs of officer time, including overtime; per diem; and transportation, such as vehicle costs, gas, and maintenance.

Given the complexity of the analysis, a statistically valid sample of representative time periods could be reviewed rather than a year's worth of data. These current transfer costs should then be compared to the costs of relocating or adding crisis stabilization unit or transition care unit beds.

By no later than the end of the 2000-01 fiscal year, we recommend that the department assess the effectiveness of establishing or relocating crisis stabilization beds statewide, with particular attention to Region I. The department should determine whether facility and staffing costs are more significant than transport costs and the potential security problems involved in transporting inmates and regularly reducing the number of employees on duty in the prisons.

Table 6A

Statutory Requirements for Program Evaluations and Justification Reviews

Section 11.513(3), *Florida Statutes*, provides that OPPAGA Program Evaluation and Justification Reviews shall address nine issue areas. Our conclusions on these issues as they relate to Health Services are summarized below.

Issue	OPPAGA Conclusions
The identifiable cost of the program	For the 1999-2000 fiscal year, the Legislature appropriated \$227 million to the Department of Corrections for health services. This total includes \$27 million for contracts with private companies for health services at South Florida Reception Center, Broward, Okeechobee, Taylor, and Everglades correctional institutions. Health services are funded primarily from general revenue funds.
The specific purpose of the program, as well as the specific public benefit derived therefrom	The department is required to provide health services to inmates as part of its responsibility for inmate supervision; the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that inmates are entitled to access to health services. Providing adequate health care to inmates is in the public interest because it reduces the impact of epidemics and provides preventive care that is less costly than acute care.
Progress towards achieving the outputs and outcomes associated with the program	<p>The three current measures for health services performance are inmate grievances, inmate suicides, and prison health care costs.</p> <p>Grievances: The inspector general is responsible for maintaining records for inmate grievances. Because the grievance information provided in the Long Range Program Plan is not consistent with inspector general records, the standards established in the plan do not appear to be based on accurate information. For example, the plan uses as the 1996-97 baseline standard 58 grievances upheld, while the IG reports that for that year 109 grievances were upheld. However, the department's performance in this area appears to be satisfactory. Although over the course of the last four years the number of grievances has gone up, the percentage of grievances upheld is decreasing.</p> <p>Suicides: The department is supposed to report two statistics for this measure. The first, the rate for the department, was inaccurate in the Long Range Program Plan. The second, the rate of suicides compared to the national average, was not reported. We calculated that for the 1999-2000 fiscal year, the department had a suicide rate of 8.4 per 100,000 inmates. This compares favorably with the national rate of 16.6 per 100,000 inmates.</p> <p>Costs: The department did not report on whether it met HMO or Medicaid per diem measures. No standards were ever established for these measures. As discussed in the report, these measures do not provide a sound basis for comparison due to the differences in the populations.</p>

Issue	OPPAGA Conclusions
An explanation of circumstances contributing to the state agency's ability to achieve, not achieve, or exceed its projected outputs and outcomes, as defined in s. 216.011, <i>F.S.</i> , associated with the program	<p>Grievances: According to program staff, the number of grievances being upheld is declining because of training provided by Office of Health Services to medical staff and the emphasis on responding appropriately to inmate health care concerns.</p> <p>Suicides: The department attributes its low inmate suicide rate to following the suicide prevention guidelines developed by the United States Department of Justice.</p> <p>Costs: The department reports that it actively manages the delivery of health care and acts as a public HMO. Activities include hospital scheduling and utilization; contracting for favorable rates for certain planned procedure; and running its own surgical centers.</p>
Alternative placement or courses of action that would result in administering the program more efficiently and effectively	<p>We recommend that the department continue to consolidate inmates by health care needs to as to reduce operational costs.</p> <p>As recommended in OPPAGA Report No. 96-22, the department is privatizing health services in one department region. The Legislature has directed the department to issue a Request for Proposals to privatize in South Florida (Region IV). If there is a successful bidder, the department anticipates signing a contract by January 22, 2001. Decisions about whether it is cheaper or more effective to privatize and whether privatization should be expanded should be made after assessing the results of privatizing care.</p> <p>We also recommend that the department assess whether it would be more cost-effective to reallocate crisis stabilization unit or therapeutic care unit beds than to continue to transport 1,867 inmates across the state for these services.</p>
The consequences of discontinuing the program	Discontinuing the provision of health services is not an option, as the court ruled in <i>Estelle v. Gamble</i> that inmates are entitled to health services.
Determination as to public policy; which may include recommendations as to whether it would be sound public policy to continue or discontinue funding the program, either in whole or in part	This is not a possible option since inmates must be provided adequate health care.
Whether the information reported pursuant to s. 216.03(5), <i>F.S.</i> , has relevance and utility for the evaluation of the program	<p>The issues addressed by the current measures (grievances, suicides, and per diem costs) are valid measures of performance for this program. However, all three should be modified to specify the time period measured as the fiscal year. In addition, the health care cost per diem measure should be revised to exclude references to HMOs and Medicaid HMOs, as these are not useful comparisons. Instead, the department's per diem over time should be used. We also recommend that the Legislature add the measure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number and percentage of mortality reviews that identify inappropriate care, as determined by the department and by the CMA in their mortality reviews, by fiscal year. <p>The department should also collect data on the internal measures below to more effectively assess its activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual percentage increase in expenditure rate per inmate compared to the medical and medical services components of the Consumer Price Index, by fiscal year • Number of deficiencies cited by Correctional Medical Authority that were noted as corrected on follow-up corrective action visits, by level of severity, by the time period covered by the survey

Issue	OPPAGA Conclusions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number, level and type of CMA deficiencies cited, by survey period, that were appealed by the department and upheld ¹ • The number and mortality rate per 100,000, by cause of death, e.g., cardiac, complications of HIV/AIDS, etc., by fiscal year • Comparison of department costs of providing health care versus the costs of private health care vendors to provide health care services to similar inmate populations provided that the contract for privatization of Region IV is signed
<p>Whether state agency management has established control systems sufficient to ensure that performance data are maintained and supported by state agency records and accurately presented in state agency performance reports</p>	<p>The Department of Corrections Office of the Inspector General, Bureau of Internal Audit issued Report No. 99007, <i>Performance-Based Budgeting Report</i>, August 17, 1999, found the measures used for health services and the data and procedures to collect the data were deficient. The audit noted that the measures pertaining to grievances and suicides should specify the time period used. The audit also noted the absence of written documented procedures to explain how the data for the measures are entered, maintained, and reported by the Office of Health Services.</p> <p>The department has developed written procedures to correct the audit deficiency, however, it has not followed them in its Long Range Performance Plan. The wording of the measures has not been modified to specify that the data will be collected and measured by fiscal year.</p>

¹ This measure cannot be tracked until the CMA and the department adopt the appeal process.
Source: OPPAGA analysis.

Community Corrections

Background

The mission of Community Corrections is to protect the public by ensuring that offenders on probation comply with Florida law and conditions specified by the courts. At an average offender cost of \$2.68 a day, probation is a cost-effective alternative to prison, which has a per inmate cost of \$52.26 a day. With 180 probation offices statewide, the Office of Community Corrections is responsible for supervising 203,466 offenders in the community.

Offenders sentenced to probation are required to pay court costs and the costs of their supervision. When applicable, offenders are also required to pay victim restitution, maintain employment, and attend drug and other treatment programs. At least once a month, probation officers may visit the offender's home and place of employment and, in turn, the offender is required to visit the probation officer at his or her office. Violation of these conditions may result in the court revoking probation and imposing a prison sentence.

Correctional probation officers supervise several types of offenders. Offenders in pre-trial intervention programs are first-time offenders that have committed a non-violent third degree felony and will not be formally charged if they complete the conditions of their supervision.⁷⁰ Probation officers also supervise offenders sentenced by the court to community supervision. As seen in Exhibit 27, the court can impose several types of community supervision.

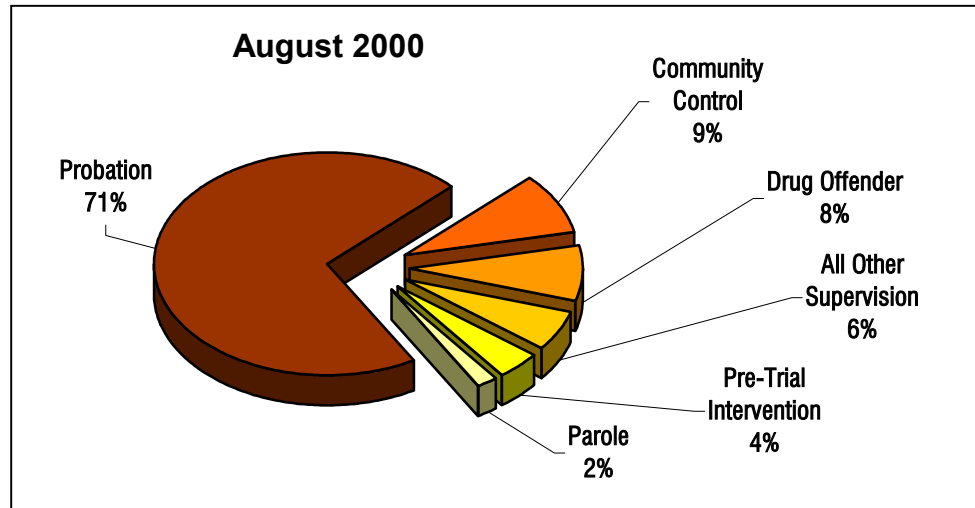
- **Probation**—the offender is required to abide by all conditions of the court, including payments of restitution and court costs, visits with probation officers, and treatment.
- **Community control**—the court sentences the offender to a form of house arrest that may include electronic monitoring of the offender, including sex offenders.
- **Drug offender probation**—the court sentences the offender to intensive supervision that emphasizes individualized treatment plans and random drug testing.

⁷⁰ The department has proposed the transfer of this program to the courts in its Fiscal Year 2001-02 agency budget request.

- **Parole**—a post-prison supervision program where inmates sentenced for crimes prior to 1983 are supervised by the department under terms set by the Florida Parole Commission.

Exhibit 27

The Majority of Offenders in the Community Are on Probation



Note: All Other Supervision = includes non-contact supervision of low risk offenders and post prison releases.

Source: Department of Corrections.

Program funding

In Fiscal Year 2000-01, the Legislature appropriated \$227.1 million and 4,077 positions to the Community Corrections Program. (See Exhibit 28.) Trust funds and general revenue funds account for 7% and 93% of the program's funding, respectively.

Exhibit 28

Community Corrections Is Primarily Funded from General Revenue

Funding Source	Fiscal Year 2000-01 (in millions)
General Revenue	\$211.8
Trust Funds	
Operating Trust Fund	\$ 8.8
Grants and Donations Trust Fund	6.3
Inmate Welfare Trust Fund	0.2
Trust Funds Total	\$ 15.3
Total	\$227.1

Source: General Appropriations Act Fiscal Year 2000-20001.

Program Performance

The Community Corrections Program continues to improve

Over 200,000 probationers interact with law-abiding citizens everyday in offices, shopping centers, and neighborhoods. How probationers are supervised and the methods used to control their behavior have vast implications for citizen safety and quality of life. The department continues to make modifications to its community corrections program. Recent achievements include:

- accreditation by the American Correctional Association, which shows that community corrections operates according to best practices identified by leaders in the field of corrections;
- standardizing the criteria for accepting other states' probationers by centralizing the Interstate Compact Office in Tallahassee and having centralized workers prescreen other states' probationer requests to move to Florida; and
- working with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) to post all sexual predators' and sex offenders' pictures on the FDLE website.

Moreover, the department has effectively used electronic monitoring to more closely supervise offenders on community control.

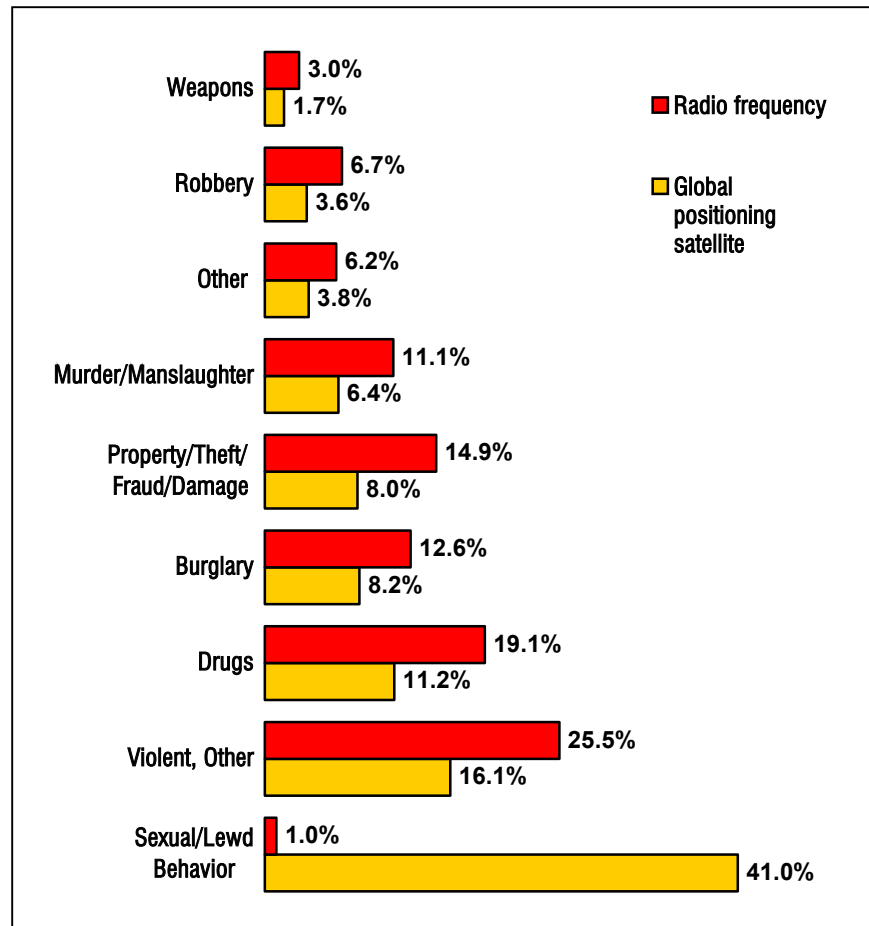
Electronic monitoring effectively supervises offenders

The use of electronic monitoring to assist officers in supervising offenders under community control (house arrest) is an effective tool to prevent offenders from absconding and committing new crimes. The Legislature funds two types of electronic monitoring devices: radio frequency and global positioning satellite (GPS). Both devices require the offenders to wear a transmitter on their ankles which is connected to a monitoring device. For offenders on radio frequency, the monitoring device is connected to a telephone and for offenders on GPS, the device is connected to a satellite. Unlike radio frequency, which monitors the offender's movement in and out of his residence, GPS can track and locate an offender's every movement 24 hours a day.

In Fiscal Year 1999-00, the department admitted 960 offenders to electronic monitoring: 301 to radio frequency and 659 to GPS.⁷¹ As seen in Exhibit 29, the majority of offenders placed under electronic monitoring committed sex crimes.

⁷¹ For Fiscal Year 1999-2000, more offenders were sentenced to GPS than to RF. For both units, the average length of time for offenders placed on electronic monitoring was six months.

Exhibit 29
Sex Offenders Comprise the Largest Portion of Offenders
Sentenced to Electric Monitoring¹



¹Global positing satellite and radio frequency admissions from July 1, 1999, to June 30, 2000.
 Source: The Florida Department of Corrections, Bureau of Research and Data Analysis.

Offenders on GPS re-offend less frequently

Department data demonstrate that offenders monitored by GPS technology re-offend less frequently compared to offenders monitored by radio frequency or to offenders on community control with no electronic monitoring. As shown in Exhibit 30, half as many offenders on GPS (0.8%) had their probation revoked for committing a new felony as those on radio frequency (1.6%). Both of these rates compared favorably to the 6.1% offenders on community control that had their probations revoked for committing a new felony. In addition, a lower rate of offenders on GPS and radio frequency absconded than offenders on community control. These data justify the Legislature's continued support of electronic monitoring.

Exhibit 30 Offenders Monitored Electronically Re-Offend Less Frequently

All Offenders	Community Control		Radio Frequency		Global Positioning	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total Offenders per Category	32,499		1,895		792	
Revoked - New Felony	1,985	6.1%	30	1.6%	6	0.8%
Revoked - New Misdemeanor	737	2.3%	15	0.8%	1	0.1%
Revoked - Technical	7,152	22.0%	193	10.2%	36	4.5%
Absconded	2,144	6.6%	92	4.8%	20	2.5%

Offenders active at any time from July 1, 1998, through June 30, 2000.
Outcomes as of June 30, 2000.

Source: The Florida Department of Corrections, Bureau of Research and Data Analysis (September 1, 2000).

The department has concentrated on its mission of public safety by relying on outside technical expertise for its electronic monitoring services. To maintain its public safety focus, the Department of Corrections' duties of collecting and disbursing offender funds should be transferred to the Department of Revenue, whose mission is more closely aligned with this function.

Managing offender funds detracts from the agency's public safety mission, and the agency should be relieved of these duties

As a condition of their probation, offenders are required to pay restitution to their victims, court costs, and the costs associated with probation supervision. Florida law provides that the court may order the Department of Corrections to collect and disburse victim restitution and other payments from these offenders and allows the department to impose a 4% administrative fee on top of these payments to offset its collection and disbursement costs. In an effort to efficiently provide these services, the department developed an automated accounting system known as the Court-Ordered Payment System. Since 1993, the agency has collected \$445,402,985. For handling these monies, the department has collected an additional \$13,258,318 in administrative fees. In Fiscal Year 1999-2000, the department collected \$81 million and \$2.7 million in fees.

Legislative expectation not met

In authorizing the department to collect and disburse offender payments, there was a legislative expectation that agency leadership would exercise prudent stewardship over these monies, public safety would not be compromised, and victims would receive timely restitution payments. OPPAGA's review shows that these expectations have not been met.

The department's has long-standing problems with these funds that are well documented.

- Department documents from 1989 show recurrent lapses in internal controls resulting in the mishandling or loss of offender payments.
- In January 1998, the department's inspector general issued an investigative report describing how one agency employee embezzled \$128,150 from the fund due to internal control weaknesses.
- In June 1998, the Auditor General's review found instances in which controls had been ineffective in ensuring the accuracy of court costs, victim restitution, and the department's supervision costs.
- In March 1999, the agency's director of internal auditing reported that that the system does not maintain a cash balance that can be reconciled to the bank's cash balance and that if funds were misappropriated, a standard bank reconciliation would not necessarily disclose the irregularity. The report further stated that the system has significant operational control deficiencies and material internal accounting control weaknesses.

Some positive change has occurred, but interest earnings have not been maximized

The agency has recently taken steps to improve its stewardship of these funds. OPPAGA's review shows some positive change in that the agency has centralized the collection and disbursement of offender funds and placed the monies in an interest bearing account. By centralizing the banking function, the agency can now earn more interest from the fund's average monthly cash balance of \$8.5 million. Prior to that time, each region negotiated its own banking arrangements, and cash balances were such that interest earnings were negligible. Our review shows, however, that the agency has only recently improved its interest earnings. Had these monies been deposited in one central account, the state would have earned an additional \$58,400 in interest in Fiscal Year 1999-2000.

Given the agency collects an average of \$64 million a year from offenders, OPPAGA believes that strong internal control procedures, centralization of the collection and disbursement process, and investment of the funds in an interest bearing account should have been implemented and initiated at the fund's inception. We believe these ongoing problems stem from the fact that collection and disbursement of monies is not central to the agency's mission of public safety.

Highly trained probation officers function as fiscal clerks

The expectation that handling of these funds would not compromise public safety has also not been met. At a cost of \$36 million a year in probation officers' time, highly trained officers spend a disproportionate amount of time functioning as fiscal clerks. Our interviews with the agency's regional leadership and their employees showed that probation officers reported spending an average of 1½ days out of 5, or 30% of their time, trying to resolve differences in offender accounts to ensure offenders fulfill their financial obligations. Leadership in the central office disagree with these time estimates, but acknowledge the department has not conducted any time and motion studies to verify or dispute the actual amount of time spent on this work.

Regardless of whether or not these estimates are high, it is clear that problems with the Court-Ordered Payment System are taking probation officers' time from their public safety mission. Probation officers are required to make sure that offenders complete their financial obligations while on probation. When offenders pay a different amount than the amount due, the officers must then spend time in the office reconciling the account.

Inappropriate use of probation officer time compromises the public safety

There are conflicting agency viewpoints as to whether the differing payment amounts are the result of offenders' inaccurate payments, probation officers' use of the software, or problems in the computer program used to determine offender payments. In any case, the activity is an inappropriate use of officer time. The state requires probation officers to have a college degree and invests \$12,114 in each officer's law enforcement academy training so that they can supervise potentially dangerous offenders in the community. Because they incur risk in supervising these offenders, taxpayers pay extra for these officers' special risk pension benefits. Having probation officers sitting in their offices reconciling offender payments is an inappropriate use of their time, detracts from their mission of public safety, and reduces the cost effectiveness of the Community Corrections Program. Moreover, if the department relieves probation officers of this task, it may be able to reduce its overtime expenditure paid to probation officers in Fiscal Year 1999-2000 of \$3.7 million.⁷²

The department does not prioritize payments to victims

We are also concerned how the department is handling victim restitution payments. In managing these funds, the department has not clarified legislative intent for how payments to victims are to be prioritized with the offenders' other financial obligations. There is disagreement about how to interpret the law on this issue.

Section 948.09(7), *Florida Statutes*, states that "the department shall establish a payment plan for all costs ordered by the courts for collection by the department and a priority order for payments, *except that victim restitution payments authorized under s. 948.03(1)(e) take precedence over all other court-ordered payments.*" [Emphasis added] However, the department quotes ss. 895.09(1), 921.187(3), 946.512, 946.513(1), and 946.002(2)(c), *Florida Statutes*, as other laws they believe are not consistent with paying victims first. Some judicial circuits require that the courts be paid first, rather than the victims. The department uses a pro-rata distribution system that does not favor the victim over the other court-ordered obligations.

Victims often experience severe financial and emotional difficulties as a direct result of the crimes committed against them, and it is therefore

⁷² This money can be deducted from the salaries and benefits category, line items 701, 707, 710, 713, 718, 727, and 733 in the 2000-2001 General Appropriations Act.

important that the agency ask the Legislature to resolve this issue legislatively. The Auditor General's 1998 review of the department recommended that the department seek legislative clarification on this issue.⁷³ OPPAGA concurs with the Auditor General's recommendation that the department seek legislative clarification.

To remedy these long-standing fiscal, public safety, and victim restitution problems, we conclude that the collection and disbursement of offender monies should be transferred to the Department of Revenue. Public safety, not the collection and disbursement of monies, is the primary mission of the Department of Corrections, whereas the Department of Revenue has a mission of overseeing collections and disbursements of this nature. The Department of Revenue may wish to privatize some or all of this function, as it has recently privatized the collection and disbursement of child support payments. The advantages of privatizing a function like the collection and disbursement of funds have been well documented in OPPAGA's report on assessing agency privatization.⁷⁴

The Legislature should transfer responsibility to the Department of Revenue

To assist in transferring these duties to the Department of Revenue, the Governor's State Technology Office, which coordinates the purchase, lease, and use of all information technology services for state agencies, should act as a liaison in the transfer of these duties from the Department of Corrections to the Department of Revenue. If the State Technology Office is unavailable for this task, the Department of Revenue should proceed on its own.

If available, the State Technology Office should also be used to help the Department of Revenue develop a needs assessment defining essential elements for an efficient court-ordered payment system. At the very least, the payment system must ensure accurate and timely collection and disbursement of offender monies and free probation officers of accounting duties so that they can concentrate on their primary mission of public safety. Officers should, however, be provided terminals with real-time financial data so that they can monitor offender compliance with financial requirements. Pending legislative clarification, the system should ensure that payments to victims take precedence over all other obligations. Payments should not be disbursed unless they reach a threshold, such as \$10, due to the cost of the transaction. Monies collected from offenders should be placed in an interest bearing account. Department of Corrections clerical staff will need to enter the court-

⁷³See the Auditor General's report entitled *Operational Audit of the Florida Department of Corrections*, pp. 33-34, Report No. 13262, June 1998. Also, if the Legislature determines that victims should be paid first, the courts and the department may experience a financial shortfall. Offenders who have made a good faith effort to meet the terms of their probation do not generally have their probation extended for failure to pay off court and supervision costs. Supervision costs in such cases would likely be higher than the amount owed by the offender.

⁷⁴ See OPPAGA's report on *Assessing Privatization in State Agency Programs*, [Report No. 98-64](#), February 1999.

ordered payment amounts into the system for the Department of Revenue's use in collecting and disbursing funds.

We recommend that the Legislature amend

- Section 775.089(11)(b), *Florida Statutes*, to read, *The court may order the Department of Corrections Department of Revenue shall collect and dispense restitution and other payments ordered by the courts from persons remanded to the custody or supervision of the Department of Corrections. The Department of Corrections will transfer the responsibility of collecting and disbursing offender payments to the Department of Revenue by December 31, 2002. To assist in this transfer, the following shall occur:*
 - ♦ *775.089(11)(b)(1): The Department of Revenue shall work with the Department of Corrections' staff to develop a needs assessment of the court-ordered payment system by September 30, 2001. If available, the State Technology Office can provide assistance in conducting the needs assessments.*
 - ♦ *775.089(11)(b)(2): Based on the results of the needs assessment and cost-benefit analysis, the Department of Revenue may, through competitive bidding, procure services from a private vendor to perform functions necessary for the court-ordered payment system. The department shall issue and evaluate requests for proposals, and award the winning contract by March 30, 2002. The new automated system for collecting and disbursing offender payments shall be operational by December 31, 2002.*
 - ♦ *775.089(11)(b)(3): The Department of Revenue shall include performance standards in the contract with a private vendor. Standards can include effectiveness of customer service, efficiency of disbursement of collections, and the timeliness of vendor to deposit payments, disburse payments, and correct errors.*
- Section 948.09(7), *Florida Statutes*, to read, *The Department of Corrections shall establish a payment plan for all costs ordered by the courts for collection by the department and a priority order for payments, except that victim restitution payments authorized under 948.03(1)(e) take precedence over all other court-ordered payments. The Department of Revenue is not required to disburse cumulative amounts of less than \$10 to individual payees established on this payment plan. The Department of Corrections shall set a payment schedule for each offender and give this payment information to the Department of Revenue. The Department of Revenue shall disburse offender payments to victims first, then to other payees prioritized by the courts or by the Department of Corrections. The Department of Revenue shall provide automated monthly statements of the amount of money they collected from each offender and the amount of money disbursed.*

- Section 948.09(7)(a), *Florida Statutes*. If the Department of Revenue is unable to locate the victim(s) to disburse payment, they shall use due diligence to find the(se) victim(s). If the Department of Revenue is unable to locate the victim(s) in 180 days, the Department of Revenue shall disburse the money to the Crimes Compensation Trust Fund in the Office of the Attorney General as established in s. 960.21, Florida Statutes.

Replacing certified court officers with civilians would save \$340,069 annually in pension benefits

Past OPPAGA reports have shown that costs are reduced when civilians in jobs not requiring law enforcement skills replace sworn officers.⁷⁵ The Department of Corrections is incurring higher costs by using sworn probation intake officers for courtroom duties that could be assumed by civilians. The primary duties of court officers are to attend court proceedings and inform judges of the various probation programs available for offenders, and instruct offenders as to the location of their assigned probation office. Occasionally, court officers confer with probation officers regarding those offenders who are to appear before the court. The court officers then convey that information to the judge. The process is designed to enable field probation officers to remain in the field and not have to appear in court to testify on the offender in question.

Court officers incur little risk, compared to probation officers

Court officers incur virtually none of the risks assumed by probation officers, yet they are on the special risk pension system. Unlike probation officers who visit an offender's home and place of employment, frequently unarmed and without police backup, court officers are rarely exposed to offenders outside the courtroom setting. While in the courtroom, their primary interaction with offenders is explaining the location of assigned probation offices. Court officers are protected in their duties by armed bailiffs assigned to the courtroom. Moreover, those entering the courtrooms generally pass through metal detectors.

The state would realize significant savings if the court officer positions were staffed with civilians. Savings would occur even if civilians were paid the same salary currently earned by court officers. The department would not have to pay each civilian the \$12,114 currently spent on each probation officer's academy training—a total of \$1,078,146 for 89 officers. It also would not have to pay the special risk pension. Replacing officers in court with civilians would create an annual savings of \$340,069 in special risk pension benefits at officer's salaries.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ See OPPAGA's *Justification Review of the Florida Highway Patrol Program*, [Report No. 98-87](#), June 1999, and *Performance Audit of the Division of Florida Highway Patrol Within the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles*, Report No. 11698, July 29, 1991.

⁷⁶ Pension cost savings would come out of the salaries and benefits category, line item 701 in the

Although the department acknowledges that civilians could assume the court officer position, they attribute the use of officers to the strong support judges have given these positions. Judges reported they appreciate the knowledge probation officers bring to the courtroom concerning the various probation programs available, their ability to present information on behalf of an offender's probation officer, and their ability to answer specific questions offenders have after being sentenced to probation. We concur that court officers fulfill a valuable role in the criminal justice system. However, we contest the need for taxpayers to pay for law enforcement training and special risk pensions, when these officers assume none of the duties or risks incurred by probation officers. Well-educated civilians could provide this same valuable service.

We therefore recommend that department reclassify the court intake officer position to one of civilian status by July 1, 2001. This action will allow the state to save \$340,069 in special risk pension benefits annually. After July 1, 2001, court intake officers who want to remain in the courtroom will no longer be classified as probation officers and will therefore not be eligible for the special risk pension system. Those officers who want the special risk pension benefit will need to transfer to the field to work as probation officers, when those positions become vacant.

The department could save \$31,257 annually by providing vehicles for employees who drive extensively

OPPAGA has previously reported the savings that state agencies can accrue when they assign state-owned vehicles to employees who drive extensively.⁷⁷ Break-even analysis, conducted by the Department of Management Services' Division of Motor Vehicles and Watercraft Management, shows that it is cheaper to provide state-owned vehicles to employees who drive more than 12,500 miles a year than it is to reimburse them at 29 cents a mile. Such analysis assumes a 6% investment rate, and the vehicle is a Chevrolet Cavalier, purchased at the state contract price of \$12,893, with a six-year useful life.

Thirty-five employees drive more than 13,750 miles annually

Because potential savings are marginal at mileage barely exceeding the 12,500-mile break-even point, our analysis calculated savings at 10% above the break-even point, or 13,750 miles. We identified 35 employees whose annual mileage in Fiscal Year 1999-2000 exceeded the break-even point by more than 10%. These 35 employees drove an average of 16,606 miles at a total annual cost of \$168,551.

2000-2001 General Appropriations Act. Savings calculations were based on 89 employees with an average annual salary of \$34,297.44 multiplied by 9.15% for regular risk employees and by 20.29% for special risk employees and taking the difference.

⁷⁷See *Follow-up Report on Hotel and Restaurant Regulation*, [Report No. 98-15](#), October 1998; *Follow-up Report on the Use of Assigned State Vehicles and Personal Vehicle Use by State Employees*, [Report No. 98-12](#), September 1998; and *Review of Personal Vehicle Use by State Employees*, [Report No. 96-12](#), October 1996.

If the department's review of these employees' driving patterns shows that they consistently drive this kind of mileage each year, agency leadership should consider requesting state vehicles for them. Comparing reimbursement vs. new car purchase for these employees, net present value analysis shows an annual savings of \$893 per vehicle, or \$31,257 per year could be realized by furnishing these 35 employees with state vehicles. Savings per vehicle would be higher for those driven more than 16,606 miles per year.

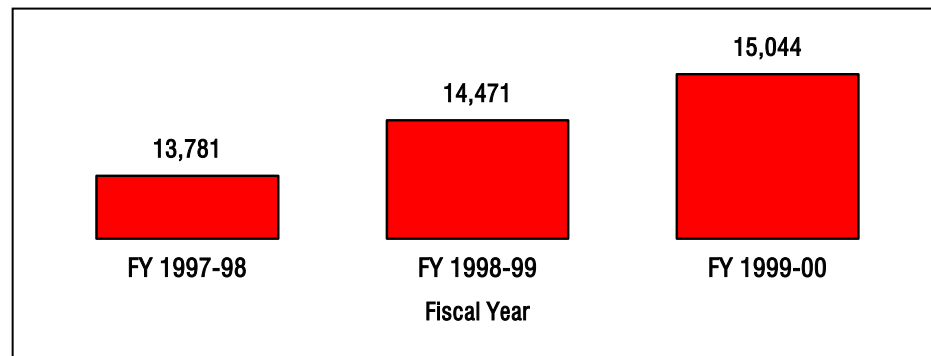
We therefore recommend that the department request the Legislature to fund the purchase of vehicles for those employees driving more than 13,750 miles a year. This investment would result in an estimated savings of \$187,542 and a rate of return of 12% over the vehicles' useful lives.

The department needs to target its efforts to apprehend offenders that flee supervision

The goal of community corrections is to protect the public by ensuring that convicted felons sentenced to probation are sufficiently supervised to comply with the law and their court-ordered conditions. When offenders flee supervision, or abscond, this goal has not been met. As shown in Exhibit 31, the number of offenders in absconder status has been increasing, although the rate has remained between 6.5% and 7% for the past five years.⁷⁸ The department attributes the absconder problem to the basic flight risks inherent in supervising this population.

Exhibit 31

The Number of Offenders In Absconder Status Is Increasing Each Year



Source: The Florida Department of Corrections, Bureau of Research and Data Analysis, August 31, 2000.

Officers try to find absconders, but efforts are not targeted

Department employees follow specific procedures when offenders initially abscond. Officers check the offender's last address, interview friends and family, and check with the offender's employer. When

⁷⁸ We calculated the absconder rate by dividing the number of offenders that absconded during the year by the number of offenders assigned to probation that year.

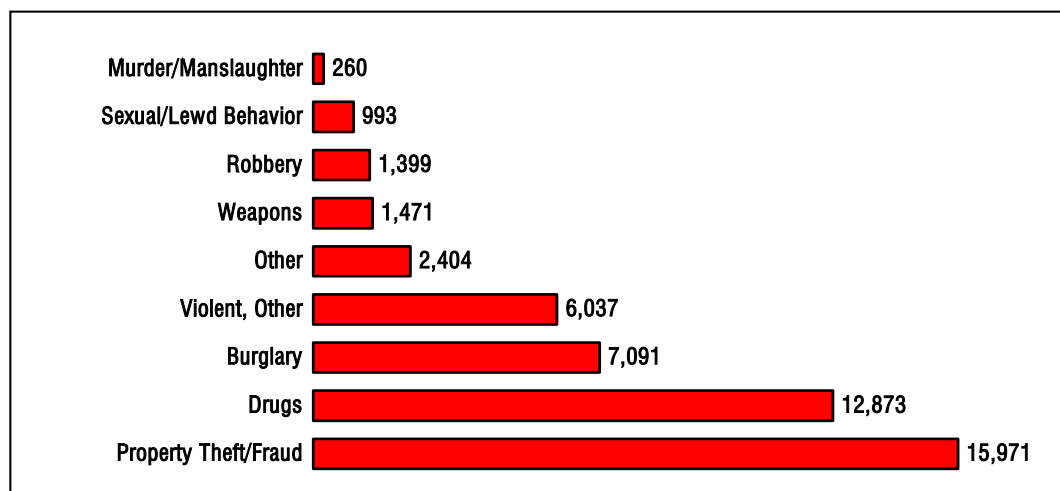
officers are unable to locate offenders, they write a violation of probation report and submit it to the judge. The judge then signs a warrant for the absconder's arrest and the county sheriff enters the warrant into a database. This information will notify law enforcement officers that the person has absconded from probation, should the offender be stopped for some other reason, such as a traffic violation.

It is important for the department to find absconders because they are convicted felons unsupervised in the community who are not complying with judicial orders and may commit new crimes. Thus, the department needs to systematically address the absconder problem. From a practical standpoint, the department should identify which absconders pose the greatest threat to public safety. The department does not maintain statewide data on the number of absconders that commit new crimes or end up in prison. Probation workers in Broward County did do a limited study of absconders in their circuit in May 1999.⁷⁹ In their small sample, they found that all absconders who committed new crimes were short-term absconders; they had all been at large for less than a year and usually less than six months. This study would seem to indicate that the department should focus apprehension efforts on individuals that have recently absconded.

The department could also give higher priority to absconders whose crimes are of greater concern to public safety. As shown in Exhibit 32, absconders have committed a wide range of felonies.

⁷⁹ *Operation Dragnet: A Study of the Absconder Problem and a Proposed Solution*, Florida Department of Corrections, May 12, 1999.

Exhibit 32
Absconders Committed a Wide Variety of Crimes



Source: The Florida Department of Corrections, Bureau of Research and Data Analysis, August 28, 2000.

***Assigning officers
could help***

We identified three apprehension strategies the agency could use to target those absconders that it determines constitute the biggest threat to public safety. First, the department could assign one or two probation officers in each of the state's 20 judicial circuits to work full-time on finding absconders. These officers could prioritize those absconders who pose the greatest risk.

Texas has had success in targeting absconders with this strategy.⁸⁰ For example, the local probation department in Williamson County, Texas, created a two-person unit to pursue absconders. Officers try to find recent absconders first, then missing felons. In its second year of operation, the unit arrested 605 absconders and collected \$51,000 in unpaid penalties.

***Officers should work in
partnerships to target
efforts***

Second, those officers designated to apprehend absconders could enhance their efforts by systematically seeking out partnerships with local law enforcement agencies. In some parts of the state, probation offices already partner with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies and participate in sweeps to apprehend absconders and other probation violators. However, the sweeps do not systematically target recent absconders or those posing the greatest threat to public safety. These partnerships do not exist statewide and the frequency of the sweeps varies. Many local law enforcement agencies are amenable to such partnering because they get credit for the resulting felony arrests.

⁸⁰ Center for Civic Innovation, "Broken Windows" Probation: The Next Step in Fighting Crime, August 1999.

***Absconder pictures on
the website may help***

Third, the department could consider using the Internet to find absconders. Oregon's Department of Corrections posts pictures and information about absconders on its website. We have discussed this idea with agency officials and they have begun developing a website for this purpose.

To protect the public safety and stop the increasing number of offenders from fleeing supervision, the department needs to take immediate corrective action. We recommend that the department place priority on finding absconders who pose the greatest threat to public safety. We further recommend that probation officers partner with local law enforcement agencies to apprehend absconders. Throughout the state there are community corrections employees that have experience in this area and can help agency leadership in this effort. Finally, we recommend that the department complete its efforts to post absconders' pictures on its website.

Table 7A

Statutory Requirements for Program Evaluations and Justification Reviews

Section 11.513(3), *Florida Statutes*, provides that OPPAGA Program Evaluation and Justification Reviews shall address nine issue areas. Our conclusions on these issues as they relate to Community Corrections are summarized below.

Issue	OPPAGA Conclusions
The identifiable cost of the program	The Legislature appropriated \$227 million and 4,077 positions for Fiscal Year 2000-01. General revenue funds account for 93% of total appropriations to this program.
The specific purpose of the program, as well as the specific public benefit derived therefrom	The mission of the Community Corrections Program is to ensure that offenders sentenced by the courts to community supervision comply with conditions in the court order. Community supervision gives judges a less expensive alternative to sentencing offenders to state prison. While under community supervision, offenders work, get treatment, and pay victim restitution and costs of supervision.
Progress towards achieving the outputs and outcomes associated with the program	The program did not meet its performance-based program budgeting standards. More offenders absconded or were revoked from probation within a two-year period than expected. More offenders who completed residential, non-residential, secure, and non-secure drug treatment programs were revoked, absconded, or returned to state prison than expected.
An explanation of circumstances contributing to the state agency's ability to achieve, not achieve, or exceed its projected outputs and outcomes, as defined in s. 216.011, <i>F.S.</i> , associated with the program	<p>In its Long Range Program Plan for Fiscal Years 2001-02 through 2005-06, the program provided four reasons for not meeting performance standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases in the number of offenders committed to supervision had a negative impact on the program's ability to meet the target population standards. Changes in the Florida Criminal Punishment Code have resulted in the potential for more points assessed against offenders who violate conditions of supervision, thereby increasing the possibility of a prison sentence. The circuit courts, not the program, revoke offenders' probation. Program managers have no control over offenders once they have completed their terms of supervision. For those measures that report on the status of offenders two years after the period of supervision was imposed, management argues that their efforts would have little effect on these offenders as they have successfully completed the treatment programs and are no longer under active community supervision.

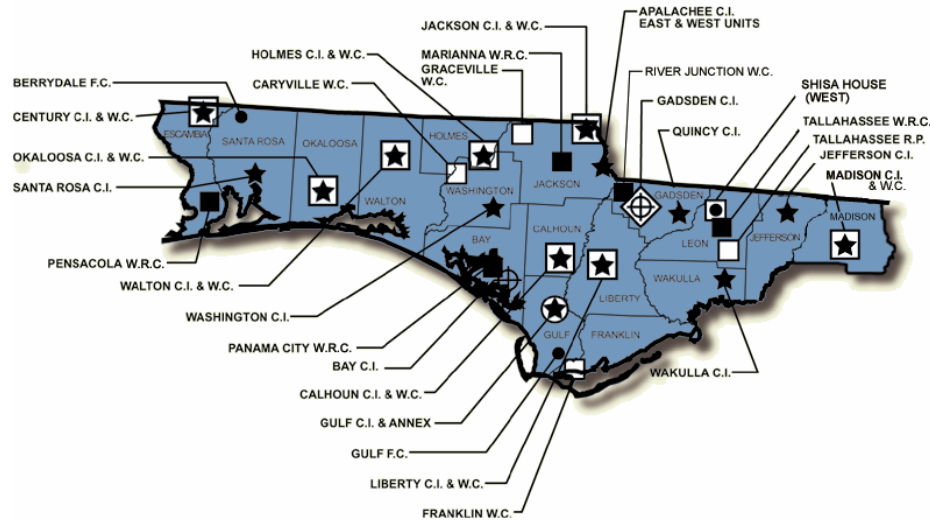
Issue	OPPAGA Conclusions
Alternative courses of action that would result in administering the program more efficiently and effectively	<p>To ensure accountability to legislators and taxpayers, we make four recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department should hire civilians to work as court officers, thereby saving \$340,069 annually in pension benefits. • The Legislature could provide vehicles for those employees who drive over 13,750 miles a year and realize annual savings of \$31,257. • The department should target its limited resources to finding absconders that pose the greatest risk to public safety. • The Legislature should amend s. 775.089(11)(b), <i>F.S.</i>, to replace the Department of Corrections with the Department of Revenue as the agency responsible for the collection and disbursements of payments made by those under the supervision and custody of the Department of Corrections.
The consequences of discontinuing the program	<p>Without a program that uses trained officers to supervise offenders in the community, the courts would have to sentence thousands more offenders to prison, thereby increasing costs, increasing prison crowding, and decreasing monies collected from offenders for victim restitution, court costs, and costs of supervision.</p>
Determination as to public policy; which may include recommendations as to whether it would be sound public policy to continue or discontinue funding the program, either in whole or in part	<p>This program provides beneficial supervision of offenders in the community. This review identifies several alternatives for improving program effectiveness.</p>
Whether the information reported pursuant to s. 216.03(5), <i>F.S.</i> , has relevance and utility for the evaluation of the program	<p>The program outcome measures are limited and generally assess the outcomes of offenders in drug treatment programs. Available data indicate that the program did not meet its performance standards. We recommend that the Legislature adopt the following additional measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number/percentage of victims expressing satisfaction with probation and parole services; • number/percentage of offenders successfully completing community supervision; • number/percentage of unemployed offenders at initial assessment; and • number/percentage of offenders obtaining employment within six months.
Whether state agency management has established control systems sufficient to ensure that performance data are maintained and supported by state agency records and accurately presented in state agency performance reports	<p>The Inspector General's Office grouped the performance measures passed by the Legislature for the Community Corrections Program into six measures. The Inspector General's Office had serious concerns about the internal controls for the Court-Ordered Payment System and felt that the agency response was inadequate because it did not address corrective action taken or to be taken on the audit findings and recommendations. The inspector general's review did not find any major discrepancies for the remaining measures.</p>

Source: OPPAGA analysis.

Appendix A

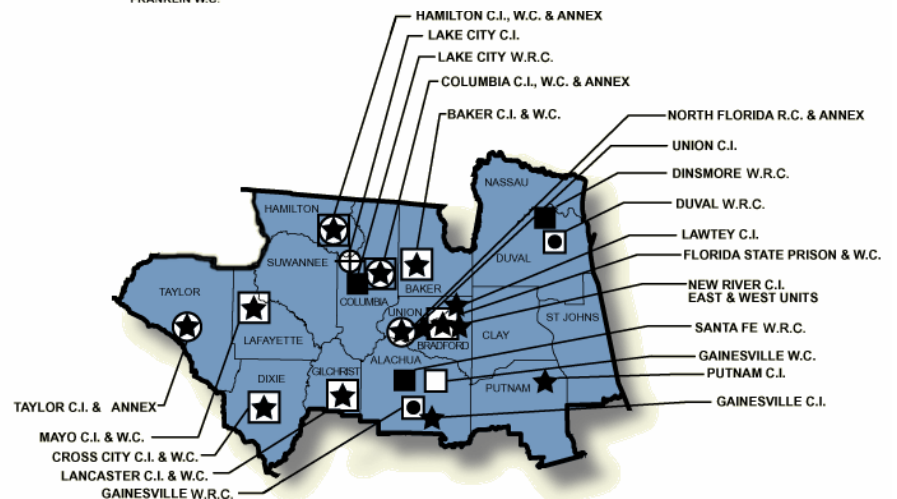
Department of Corrections Facility Locations

Region I



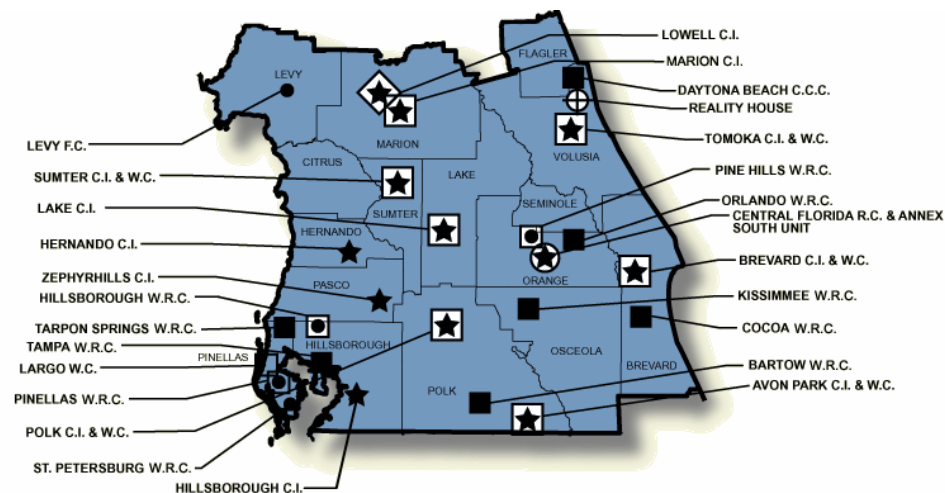
Region II

Legend	
★	Major Institutions
★	Major Institutions with Annex
★	Major Institutions with Work Camp
★	Major Institution with Annex and Work Camp
◆	Female Institutions
⊕	Private Facilities
■	Work Release Centers
■	Female Work Release Centers
●	Forestry Camps
⊗	Drug Treatment Centers
□	Road Prisons and Work Camps
◆	Private Female Facilities

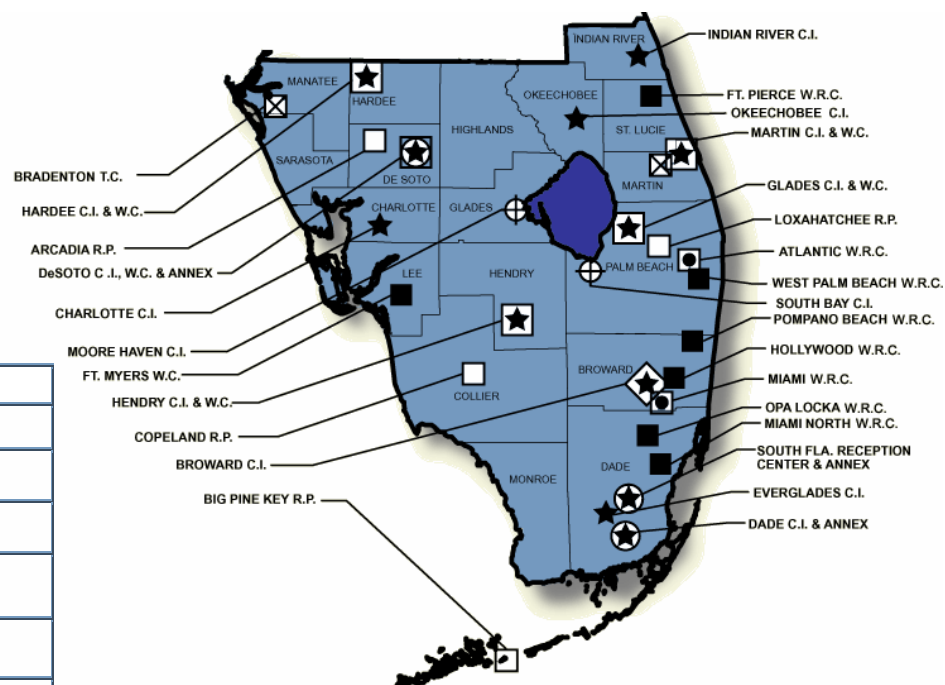


Source: Department of Corrections website at <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/facilities/>.

Region III



Region IV



Legend	
★	Major Institutions
★	Major Institutions with Annex
★	Major Institutions with Work Camp
★	Major Institution with Annex and Work Camp
★	Female Institutions
⊕	Private Facilities
■	Work Release Centers
■	Female Work Release Centers
●	Forestry Camps
⊗	Drug Treatment Centers
□	Road Prisons and Work Camps
⊕	Private Female Facilities

Source: Department of Corrections website at <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/facilities/>.

Response from the Department of Corrections

In accordance with the provisions of s. 11.45(7)(d), *Florida Statutes*, a draft of our report was submitted to the Secretary of the Department of Corrections for his review and response.

The Secretary's written response is reprinted herein beginning on page 97. The attachments to which the Secretary refers have not been reprinted herein but are available upon request.



**FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT of
CORRECTIONS**

**Governor
JEB BUSH**
**Secretary
MICHAEL W. MOORE**

Equal Opportunity Employer

2601 Blair Stone Road • Tallahassee, FL 32399-2500
Phone: (850) 488-7480

<http://www.dc.state.fl.us>
Fax: (850) 922-2848

December 8, 2000

John W. Turcotte, Director
Office of Program Policy Analysis
and Government Accountability
111 West Madison Street, Room 312
Claude Pepper Building
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1475

Dear Mr. Turcotte:

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to your office's review of the Department of Corrections reorganization efforts and evaluation of department programs. I am pleased that your analysis of department programs and operations reflects an overall good performance in the essential functions this agency is entrusted to do - protecting the public, being fiscally responsible, and preparing offenders for re-entry into society. A detailed response by the individual Directors with page references is attached with both comments and recommended corrections.

I do take exception to your findings regarding reorganization and management issues. As I have stated before, reorganization was intended to increase standardization and consistency of operations; to promote efficiency; and to refocus efforts on the primary mission of the department, that being public safety. Nothing was done for the sake of change; everything was tied to providing better service and a better product for all stakeholders.

The department has made exceptional progress towards these goals, not "some progress" as you have indicated. As a result of reorganization, \$32.9 million in savings have been documented. To downplay these actual dollar savings and instead focus on the department not having a specific dollar goal is totally missing the point. Our intent was to instill as many efficiencies as possible and that required an analysis of current procedures and developing processes to make them more streamlined and efficient. This was an evolutionary process where the goal was progress and improvement not shooting at a fictitious target.

This was done at significant sacrifice and hard work by agency staff, of which I am extremely proud. In addition to the reorganization efforts, the department had to absorb a loss of an additional 1,200 positions in the current fiscal year. In spite of this, critical agency functions such as security, feeding, health care, payroll, purchasing, and bill paying continued to be met.

Appendix B

Mr. John W. Turcotte
December 8, 2000
Page 2

Of course, there was anxiety and discomfort among staff, but with such significant changes that was to be expected. But I object to OPPAGA 's continued reliance on antidotal information (pages 10, 12, 1, and 16) to form opinions of the "organizational atmosphere." There is no proof of widespread resistance, fear or distrust. Each and every employee is important to me. By having a clearer direction from the top down and more consistency in discipline, promotions, procedures, etc. than this agency has seen in its history , we have given employees the solid base from which long term benefits will be derived.

To compare where the department is now with where it was two years ago, by any yardstick, one would have to rate our efforts as both a fiscal and operational success. I fail to see how OPPAGA can state otherwise.

A significant measure not mentioned in the report is how the administrative component of this agency has been reduced by 35 percent over the past two years. Administration now represents only 4 percent of total department staff. I would challenge any agency, public or private, to make that level of change and still be able to meet its essential mission. We have done that and are far ahead of most others in meeting the Governor's and Legislature's 25 percent reduction goal.

Lastly, many of the problems you sited, such as inadequate control of motor vehicles and old, uncompleted construction projects, are problems this administration inherited. We agree these are problems, but give us a decent chance to fix them before criticizing. Both of these issues were receiving priority attention prior to OPPAGA 's report but to implement the correct "fix" will take time, but it should be pointed out that the effort is already underway.

I appreciate the time your staff have put into this effort, and hope you can address the concerns raised herein for a mutually beneficial report.

Sincerely,

/s/
Michael W. Moore
Secretary

Attachment