Research Capacity within Departments of Corrections and Local/Regional Jails

September 2019

Dr. Hefang Lin
Research Statistician
Orange County Corrections, Florida
Email: Hefang.Lin@ocfl.net

Tama S. Celi, Ph.D.
Chief of Research, Policy and Planning
Virginia Department of Corrections
Email: Tama.Celi@vadoc.Virginia.gov
ACA sponsored this study in 2017 to explore research capacity within corrections

Results were presented at the 2017 ACA Congress in St. Louis, MO
Methodology

- Survey was developed to gather the information

- For state corrections, the survey was sent out through ASCA with 32 responses

- For regional/local jails, the survey was sent out to a collection of 859 jails with 43 responses
What type of correctional institution is your facility and/or system?

Answered 43
This presentation focused on 43 jail facilities

- Southern Region: 54%
- Western Region: 11%
- Midwestern Region: 11%
- Eastern Region: 25%

On average, the daily population of the inmates in the jails was of 1,430.
What type of correctional institution is your facility and/or system?

- The Average Daily Population among these facilities 1,430 inmates

Answered 28
Average Population 30,696 (median=20,424)
How often does your agency utilize statistics to make decisions (data driven management)?

- Never: 2.38%
- Rarely: 2.38%
- Sometimes: 21.43%
- Often: 69.05%
- Always: 4.76%

Answered 42
How often does your agency utilize statistics to make decisions (data driven management)?

Data Driven Decisions
- Always, 13.0%
- Often, 33.3%
- Sometimes, 7.4%
- Not Reported, 46.3%
How would you rate the level of importance for research and statistics within your organization?

- Not at all Important: 2.44%
- Slightly Important: 2.44%
- Important: 36.59%
- Fairly Important: 24.39%
- Very Important: 34.15%

Answered 41
How would you rate the level of importance for research and statistics within your organization?

- Very Important: 72%
- Important: 22%
- Somewhat Important: 6%
Within your agency, is there a full-time or part-time statistician, research analyst, or related position?

- Yes, Full-time: 36.59%
- Yes, Part-time: 7.32%
- No: 56.10%

Answered 41
If you answered yes in Question 6, please answer the following question. How many statisticians, research analysts, or related positions are there in your organization or agency, is there a full-time or part-time statistician, research analyst, or related position?

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<th>Jail</th>
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<td>2.5</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Answered 18
Average respondent has 5.5 Research Staffs; maximum number was 16

All respondents except North Dakota have a full-time statistician, research analyst, or related position
What are the biggest challenges your department encounters when collecting data? Please check all that apply.

- Lack of staff: 57.50%
- Lack of data in specific areas: 47.50%
- Quality concerns: 40.00%
- Inadequate data management: 37.50%
- Validity concerns: 37.50%
- Lack of training of staff to provide: 30.00%
- Lack of funds: 22.50%
- Lack of commitment towards data: 20.00%
- Insufficient or no standards for: 15.00%
- Other (please specify): 10.00%
- Difficulty in obtaining data on: 2.50%

Answered 40
7 States reported both having a lack of funds and a lack of staff as a challenge for them.

14 States reported only a lack of staff, but not a lack of funds as a challenge for them.

Michigan and Oregon reported a lack of funds, but not a lack of staff as a challenge for them.
Challenges: Data Training and Commitment

- 12 states that reported an issue with either lack of training of staff or lack of commitment toward data collection and analysis.
- Of those 12 states, 3 had an issue with both lack of training of staff and lack of commitment toward data collection and analysis.
Challenges: Specialty Data

Other Challenges
- Data is maintained for operational purposes and not always amenable for research.
- Ensuring accuracy based on combination of validity/quality/data entry
- Inadequate data management software
- Data systems upgrades to collect data
Data Quality

Not Reported or Type of Concern not Reported
Insufficient Rules
Validity concerns
Both

The Stars represent the 19 States that stated they had Data Quality concerns.
Location of Research Unit in Jails

- **Within the office of the DOC director**: 26.32%
- **Within the public affairs office**: 5.26%
- **Within the budget office**: 10.53%
- **Other (please specify)**: 57.89%

Answered 19
Nearly one-third report to the Office of the Director
One quarter are in Administration

Programs includes Plans and Programs; Programming, Development and Evaluation; Programs; and Reentry, Classification and Clinical Services
Responsibilities of the statisticians, research analysts, or related positions in Jails

- Gather, summarize, and analyze statistics that will be utilized by the management team to make evidence-based decisions (83.33%)
- Evaluate information from various sources to prepare reports (77.78%)
- Enter data into computers for use in analyses or reports (66.67%)
- Participate in the publication of data or information (61.11%)
- Make presentations and give briefings on various statistics (61.11%)
- Enter data into computers for use in analyses or reports (55.56%)
- Strategize to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization and/or criminal justice system (44.44%)
- Develop and improve data collection procedures (44.44%)
- Record the flow of defendants through your facilities (38.89%)

Answered 18
The majority of the states who reported, (19) said that both data mining and developing and improving collection procedures were their responsibility.
Gather, summarize, and analyze statistics that will be utilized by the management team to make evidence-based decisions.

Make presentations and give briefings on various statistics.

Participate in the publication of data or information.

- Over 90% provide statistical analysis for evidence-based decision making
- 77% provide presentations and publish data or information
Jail Involvement in Requests

- Reviewing proposals: 66.67%
- Reviewing external requests from researchers: 61.11%
- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests: 61.11%
- Other (please specify): 22.22%
- IRB reviews: 16.67%

Answered 18
Responsibilities in State DOC’s Related to Requests

- 78% respond to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests
- 47% review Internal Review Board (IRB) requests
- 97% review requests from external researchers
- 81% review requests

91% have a formal process for internal research
Responsibilities in State DOC’s Related to Evaluation

- Program evaluations and Program Fidelity Review
- Recidivism Studies only
- Program evaluations and Recidivism Studies
- Program fidelity review and Recidivism Studies
- Not Reported
45% Record the flow of defendants through their facilities

68% Strategize to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization and/or criminal justice system
Is there a formal process for review and approval for the research conducted within your organization?

Answered 34

28 (90.3% of States have a formal process for review and approval of research conducted within their organization)
Where do the funds for your organization's research come from? Please check all that apply.

- Department's Budget: 85.29%
- Grants: 29.41%
- State General Funds: 2.94%
- Other (please specify): 5.88%

Answered 34
If you checked "Grants" in Question 12, please answer the following question. What are the subject matters associated with the grant?

- Re-entry: 72.73%
- Mental Health: 72.73%
- Substance Abuse Treatment: 72.73%
- Veterans: 18.18%
- Other (please specify): 18.18%
- Human Trafficking: 9.09%

Answered 11
If you checked "Grants" in Question 12, please answer the following question. What type of organization does the grant come from?

- State: 3
- Federal: 3
- Other: 2

Answered 6
11 (35.5%) receive grant funds for research
Jail and State Corrections who Maintain a Website?

- Yes: 100.00%
- No: 0.00%

Answered 33
28 (90.3%) of State DOC’s provide data tabulation for their public website.
Types of research reports archived and accessible on Jail Websites

If “Yes” please specify:

• Inmate Population And Programing Statistics
• Agency Annual Report
• Monthly Statistics On Population And Treatment Services
• Some Reports Are Posted, I.E, Annual Reports, Statistics, Etc.
• Arrest/Booking/Length of Stay Inmate Data.
• Crime Statistics
• Reports: Daily Population, Initial Appearance, PREA
• Various Reports

Answered 31
What type of statistical reports does your agency use in-house? Please check all that apply.

- Average Daily Population: 94.12%
- Budget Projections: 70.59%
- Staffing Complement: 64.71%
- Performance Indicators: 47.06%
- Population Projections: 47.06%
- Other (please specify): 8.82%
- None: 2.94%

Answered 34
17 States said that their research is used for both ADP and the budget.

8 States do not use their research for budget, but do use it for ADP.

4 States use their research for Budget, and do not use it for ADP.

1 State (New Hampshire) does not use their research for either the ADP or the Budget.
25 States said that their research is used for both population projections and population trends.

4 States said their research is used for only population trends and not population projections.

Only 1 State (Kansas) said their data is not used for either population projections or population trends.
3 States said their research was not used for either performance indicators, or for staffing complement.

16 States said research was used for both performance indicators as well as a staffing complement.
Of the 30 States that answered this question, 22 of them (75.9%) stated that they use a serious incident report for research purposes.

8 States (27.6%) stated they did not use a serious incident report for research purposes.
### Other State DOC’s uses of Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASCA/PBMS related information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contraband Finds, Offender Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fiscal information—the work release inmates’ wage information is reported on a monthly and annual basis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Month End and Annual Reports</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operational statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pharmacy, Bed Assignments, Classification, Active Sentences, Crime, Demographics, Drug Testing, Investigations, Maintenance Requests, Parole Hearings, Sex Offenders, Victim Notifications, Field Services Supervisions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population snapshots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recidivism, admissions, releases, demographic profiles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recidivism, program assessments, ad hoc requests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings: Data Driven Management

- **Jails**
  - 69% of the respondents said that they “often” use data driven management.
  - 95% of the respondents indicated that research and statistics is either “important,” “fairly important,” or “very important.”

- **State DOC’s**
  - 13% of the respondents said that they “always” use data driven management and another 33.3% said they “often” do.
  - 72% of the respondents indicated that research and statistics is “very important,” 22% “important,” and 6% “somewhat important.”
Findings: Research Capacity

Jails
• The majority (56%) of the agencies didn’t have a statistician, research analyst, or any other person with a related position on board.
• However, the agencies that had hired a statistician, research analyst, or any other person with a related position, had on average three of these staff members on their team.

State DOC’s
• Only one state didn’t have a statistician, research analyst, or any other person with a related position on board.
• Average of 5.5 Researchers (maximum 16)
Findings: Challenges

- **Jails**
  - For the biggest challenge they encountered when collecting data, majority of the respondents (58%) concluded that it was the lack of staff.

- **State DOC’s**
  - 22 (71%) adequate lack staffing
  - 23 (74.2%) lack specialized data
  - 21 (67.7%)
Importance of Research

- Understand Various Issues
- Problem Solving
- Policy
- Evidence-Based Decision Making
- Improve Safety and Reduce Accidents
- Program Evaluation
- Best Practice
- Forecasting
Discussion: Offender Population Studies

Virginia
- Trends
- Geriatric Offenders
- Female Offenders
- Overdoses and Drug Test Results
- Restrictive Housing

Orange County
- Jail Population Trends
- Mental Health Inmates
- Homeless Inmates
- Controlled Substance Related Arrests: Heroin, Cocaine, Marijuana, Fentanyl

How about you?
Discussion: Forecasting and Impact Analysis

Virginia

• Multi-agency consensus population forecast
• Legislative impact analysis for all proposals that could result in an SR sentence or impact corrections

Orange County

• Master Plan in 30 Years
• Legislative impact analysis for all proposals that could affect jail population

How about you?
Discussion: Surveys

Virginia
- Staff Environment Surveys
- Topical Surveys
- Data collection
- How other states do things

Orange County
- Benchmarking for Cost Per Day Per Inmate Survey
- Use of Force Policy Survey
- Women Leadership Survey
- Database Software Usage

How about you?
Discussion: Performance Measures

Virginia
• Operations Efficiency Measures
• Strategic Plan Measures
• Governor’s Goals Measures

Orange County
• Primary Indicators
• Orange County Office of Management and Budget Performance Measures

How about you?
Discussion: Outcomes & Program Evaluation

Virginia

• EBP Program Fidelity instrument development and feedback loops
• Outcome evaluation for programs and education
• Recidivism analysis

Orange County

• CCD Success Rate
• Recidivism Rate Study
• Outcome evaluation for programs and education

How about you?
Discussion: Operations Support and Law Suits

Virginia

• Identification of sights for programs
• Identification of sights for security equipment
• Analysis and reporting for legal cases
• CQI measurement support for health services

Orange County

• Incidents Report
• Incidents Analysis
• Staff Assignment

How about you?
Discussion: Changes in the Role of Research

Virginia

• In the last decade gone from basic trends, forecast and recidivism reporting to a data driven agency where the highest user of research is operations and reentry

• Data Driven Decision (3-D) Model is agency wide initiative

Orange County

• Over the past 10 years, there has been a surplus in the amount of internal and external data and data analysis information being requested.

• Data Driven Decision Making has expanded at the agency and county level in accordance with the Mayor’s Strategic Plan.

How about you?
Discussion: Challenges Moving Forward

Virginia

• Keeping up with the increasing demand
• Finding qualified staff

Orange County

• Multiple databases and software used to extract and analyze data.
• Databases unable to interact and exchange information.
• Policies and benchmarking are not standardized between county agencies.
• Database entry errors.

How about you?
Questions

Tama S. Celi, Ph.D.
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