



Illinois Department of Corrections



Strategic Plan

2012 Release

S.A. Godinez
Director

Illinois Department of Corrections Strategic Plan
2012 Release

The primary mission in producing a long-term Strategic Plan is to develop a proactive, forward-thinking strategy to administer initiatives that will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Illinois Department of Corrections' processes. The widespread growth of Illinois' correctional populations has produced unintended consequences for the Department, creating an environment of constant change and fiscal uncertainty for our correctional administrators. As part of this plan, the Department's executive staff will continue to discuss the issues and challenges that face the agency as well as the strategic goals necessary to ensure secure and effective management of Illinois' prison system- both now and well into the future.

Pursuant to the Illinois Crime Reduction Act of 2009, the State of Illinois declared that it is the policy of the state to preserve public safety, reduce crime, and make the most effective use of correctional resources. The implementation of the elements of this act will change the way Illinois looks at offenders. The Act places greater emphasis on alternatives to incarceration and provides incentives to local communities that develop sustainable alternatives. Information is gathered on the offenders sentenced to incarceration to effectively determine their programming and placement needs paving the offender's way to successful reentry into their community.

There are three elements in the Crime Reduction Act: The diversion of offenders from IDOC incarceration (Redeploy Illinois), the review of sentencing policies throughout the State recognizing disparities between jurisdictions (Sentencing Policy Advisory Council), and the utilization of validated tools and best practices to determine the most effective methods (Risk Assets Needs Assessment) for identifying a low risk offender and how their needs should be addressed to be more successful in the community.

In preparation for the implementation of the assessment tool, the Department is implementing this Strategic Plan. Several initiatives have been developed to address inmate classification, available bed space, segregation utilization, and reentry collaboration efforts. This framework puts in place the tools and programs needed to support a continuum of care for nearly 80,000 offenders and parolees.

It is imperative going forward that we take a systemic approach in terms of evaluating IDOC operations, program services and our medical and mental health care delivery systems. In an effort to operate at the highest efficiency level, we must take a holistic look at our entire organization. While IDOC is complex, it is also dynamic and evolving. This is a tremendous opportunity to bring together our talented workforce to affect positive change in a systematic and thoughtful way.

The Department needs to create a culture of staff and inmate participation in implementing the Strategic Plan initiatives. These initiatives have been developed to help foster such a culture and promote continued input from the people with a vested interest in producing effective results.

1. The Control and Management of the Population

The issues behind managing the offender population are many, varied and extremely complex. Most offenders enter the Department with educational deficiencies, minimal problem-solving skills and substance abuse problems. Further, given the aging of the prison population, attributed to longer sentence lengths, and preliminary evidence that more and more inmates have mental health issues; the Department has additional factors to consider in providing effective program services.

The Department will continue to review its population management and control practices with the understanding that some aspects of the overall population level are outside of the Department's control. . The Department will make it a priority to track and educate practitioners of the available control mechanisms. For those areas outside of the department's purview it intends to educate and facilitate those entities that are in the position to champion change.

1.1 Population Management Initiatives

1.1.1 Long Term Segregation Review

Review and revise policy and practice to ensure that only those inmates who continue to pose a security risk or a safety hazard are placed in long term segregation.

1.1.2 Medical Centers of Specialized Care

Maximize medical staff and resources to better care for the special needs population, including mental health, total care, infirmed and terminally ill offenders.

1.1.3 Educational and Vocational Centric Facilities

Examine the application of educational and vocational offerings to ensure soon to be released inmates have the greatest opportunities for success.

1.1.4 Release Preparation Guidance

Create transitional housing units for administrative detention and long term segregation offenders to successfully transition to general population through incentive based behavioral level systems. Also create a re-entry approach for our offenders transitioning back into society encompassing necessary services to mitigate their risk of reoffending.

1.2 Population Control Initiatives

1.2.1 Dead Time Review

Reviewing the population with dead time allows wardens to determine appropriate penalties by taking out the emotional element present at the time of the offense.

Illinois Department of Corrections Strategic Plan
2012 Release

1.2.2 Expansion of Electronic Monitoring

Electronic monitoring offers the ability to supervise a portion of the minimum security population which presents less risk to society and fulfill the terms of their sentence.

1.2.3 Maximizing Credit for Good Behavior

The application of positive behavioral credit allows the department to provide incentives to the population over a period of their incarceration to assist in maintaining order and discipline, and encouraging rehabilitation by participating in prison work, education programs or performing commendable acts.

1.2.4 Earned Good Conduct Credit Expansion

The use of EGCC could be expanded for programs which may not have been offered at the time of this legislative development.

2. Management Information Systems

The vastness of the Department's responsibilities as it relates to the safety, security and preparation of the offenders creates a need for our workforce to have the best tools available for decision making purposes. Information must be accurate, comprehensive and assessable. The Department intends to create an improved information system infrastructure to assist with operational and business processes.

2.1 Records Management

It has been estimated the Department currently has over 38,000 boxes of inmate master files. The records management project has been tasked to look at the Department's policies, practices and potential opportunities to improve this statutory responsibility for not only master files but paper record keeping as a whole.

2.2 IT Modernization

The Department has launched a three-year IT portfolio of projects to modernize its Offender Tracking System (OTS) and related PC applications as well as the hardware and software infrastructure. The focus of the project is to enhance public safety by providing more agile and complete access to offender data for improved decision-making by all relevant personnel throughout the lifecycle of incarceration and mandatory supervised release. In addition, the IT upgrades will facilitate public transparency, internal operational collaboration and cross-boundary data sharing with criminal justice entities and law enforcement partners. The plan is to convert from a legacy mainframe and client server platform to a web-based infrastructure for both the collection and delivery of data to all relevant personnel.

2.3 Security and Incident Preparedness

The safety and security of prisons is the most critical and basic priority of the Department and operationally this must never waiver. The department is constantly seeking ways to improve upon safety and will use security and incident reviews in an

Illinois Department of Corrections Strategic Plan
2012 Release

increased capacity to reveal strengths and weaknesses within the system. The goal is not to point blame but to determine areas of improvement and communicate the lessons learned in order to create learning opportunities to strengthen the security and safety of our prisons.

2.3.1 Security reviews will look at the security aspect of each facility's operation to reveal strengths and weaknesses in security and protocol. Although some of these reviews have happened in the past they will be performed as an iterative improvement process with lines of systemic communication.

2.3.2 Critical incident reviews will be comprised of trained teams doing a step by step walkthrough of what and how an incident happened in order to make recommendations to strengthen and improve security.

2.3.3 Quality of Life Tours will continue and allow trained staff to work directly with facility volunteers and staff to address some presenting patterns to mitigate concerns before they become major issues in the facilities. This in turn could assist in reducing risk to staff and the inmate population.

2.4 Risk Assets Needs Assessment Tool

The Crime Reduction Act mandates that the Illinois Department of Corrections, including the Parole Division of IDOC, and the Prisoner Review Board, adopt, validate and use a common assessment tool. Upon implementation of an assessment tool, the law requires adoption of services and programs that are consistent with evidence-based practices. The design will result in assessment information being shared across all state and local agencies and branches of government that are part of the criminal justice system as well as non-governmental organizations that provide treatment services to those under local supervision.

3. Communication, Volunteers and Visitation

The Department recognizes it can improve upon the visitation practices and opportunities by expanding into the digital realm, enhancing service delivery of telecom and inmate trust fund deposit services and aligning volunteer interactions within IDOC.

3.1 Automated Inmate Communications

Visitation is an important component in family reunification and behavior management. Due to the geographic distances between inmates and their families, it is often difficult for families to make frequent in-person visits. Likewise, the development of an electronic messaging system will allow for more frequent written communication between an inmate and loved ones, while allowing DOC to securely monitor the communication. Integrating the service delivery of the inmate trust fund deposit services with the family interaction electronic update will improve service delivery.

Illinois Department of Corrections Strategic Plan
2012 Release

3.2 Visitation Practices

The Department can benefit from standardizing its visitation policies, such as the dress code and creating a consistent message to family and visitors. Constituent services should develop a tracking mechanism to ensure that all concerns and issues are dealt with in a timely consistent manner. An updated friends and family guide will ensure that visitors and inmates know what behavior is expected of them as well as impart general knowledge about the facilities, visitation times, and other information.

3.3 Volunteers

Volunteers can be an important component in an offender's rehabilitation and can bring their knowledge and skills to the facility to support IDOC programming. The Department should increase volunteer opportunities while maintaining its commitment to the safety and security of our staff, visitors, and inmates.

4. Parole

4.1 Parole Services

The parole division will adopt the risk assessment instrument as required by the 2009 Crime Reduction Act and help to identify statewide community-based services under a continuum of care model. While a system of graduated sanctions has been in place for several years, the statewide community-based services were never fully identified and funded to support a true rehabilitative model. In addition, the division will adapt the supervision type and level to adjust for risk, rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach to supervision.

4.1.1 The parole division will continue to expand the Summit of Hope reentry initiative which has been in place for Southern Illinois areas since 2010. The Summit of Hope has become an essential conduit to introduce offenders to local community-based reentry services and encourage linkage in a supportive setting. Summit of Hope events are planned for other statewide urban centers and as a gesture of support for the program, parole supervisory staff have been solely dedicated to continue this mission of service delivery and successful reentry in partnership with local communities.

4.1.2 The parole division will analyze the effectiveness of the Day Reporting programs and their ability to support the reentry initiative of the division.

4.1.3 The parole division will analyze the effectiveness of the Halfway Back programs and their ability to support the reentry initiatives of the division.

5. Staff Development and Succession Planning

A well trained staff greatly increases safety. The Department is reviewing the policies in place regarding mandatory training and how those policies can be updated and improved upon in order to enhance professional development. The Department also plans to incorporate increased opportunities for employees wanting to gain a global vision of the

Illinois Department of Corrections Strategic Plan
2012 Release

department, setting the stage for a more informed workforce and enhanced training opportunities for the next set of agency leaders.

5.1 Targeted Training

Develop an executive management training program targeting decision-making and problem-solving skills

5.2 Staff Attrition Planning

Develop a mechanism to monitor staff attrition and turnover rates by title categories to foster short and long-term scheduling and allocations

5.3 Staff Development

Employees are the Department's most important resource. With the change in technology, the makeup of the workforce and the demands of the job, the Department must stand ready to effectively prepare employees for their current positions as well as prepare them for future opportunities within the Department.

6. Fiscal Responsibility

The Department has a responsibility to the taxpayers of Illinois to protect public safety in the most fiscally responsible manner possible. Opportunities exist within our operations to be more efficient and less wasteful.

6.1 Streamline Parole Operations

6.1.1 The Department has several parole offices through the State of Illinois, many of which are co-located on department grounds or other state-owned properties. Because parole is a field-based operation, agents perform their duties where the parolees are located – in the community. In order to achieve cost-savings and further consolidate routine office functions, the division will close several offices and relocate staff to existing parole offices or other state properties.

6.1.2 The Department will review the geographic region of each caseload, and make adjustments periodically in order to minimize commuting miles and maximize time spent interacting with parolees.

6.2 Court Writ Process Improvement

The Department has the responsibility to produce inmates at each of their court hearings causing an enormous amount of travel across the state each day. The various court systems are currently looking for ways to maximize resources and reduce unnecessary expenses, providing the department with the opportunity to review its own practices in this area. The department may be allowed to use existing video technology to fulfill some of the writ requirements in certain jurisdictions which could greatly reduce travel expenses. The department is also reviewing its planning, scheduling and supervision of court writs in an attempt to maximize

Illinois Department of Corrections Strategic Plan
2012 Release

available resources and ensure that the department is operating as efficiently as possible.

6.3 Reduce Recidivism and Increase Savings Through Sustainability

The goals are to lessen environmental impacts, improve economic viability, and reduce the human capital costs of prisons by engaging staff, educating offenders, partnering with communities and most importantly working with fellow stakeholders in both the public & private sectors towards achieving these goals.

Illinois Correctional Industries (ICI) operates a variety of sustainability based programs that include recycling & the manufacturing of “green” cleaning products to the production of biodiesel manufactured from waste vegetable oil. Offenders assigned to these programs learn real world job skills that are designed to assist them with finding gainful employment in an emerging “green collar” economy. It is well documented that recidivism rates are substantially lower for offenders released with marketable job skills.

The implementation of the Department’s strategic plan is critical in furthering the mission of the agency with the understanding that any changes must be well timed and thoughtfully executed. A strategic communication plan will be vital in assisting with information distribution and apprising management of the necessary steps to transition from previous practices to new initiatives as they are implemented. The budget office and planning and research teams are also key components to the success of the plan as the Department must be cognizant of its resources and understand the trends of the inmate population. The project management approach will bring together a set of tools and techniques to describe organize and monitor the work of project activities.

The Illinois Crime Reduction Act of 2009 declares that it is the policy of the state to preserve public safety, reduce crime, and make the most effective use of correctional resources. The implementation of the elements of this act and this strategic plan will continue to enhance the policies and procedures of the Illinois Department of Corrections and improve the way offenders are managed, housed and rehabilitated.