U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
National Institute of Justice

National Institute of Justice

Program Focus

The Orange County, Florida, Jail Educational and Vocational Programs

The Orange County, Florida, Jail Educational and Vocational Programs

by Peter Finn

I didn't want to participate in any programs, but that was the only way I could get out of 33rd Street [the main facility] into one of the buildings that have open spaces, only two guys to a cell, and good visitation rights. So I wouldn't have taken MRT [Moral Reconation Therapy—a substance abuse education program] if I didn't have to, but I'm glad I did. I learned about myself: I used to blame drugs as the source of my problems, but I learned it's my own attitudes and behavior that's responsible. Once you learn that, other things fall into place. Drug classes I had taken before never did this for me. In the life skills classes, I learned how to write a resume and present myself at a job interview, like sitting up straight. But you have to obey the rules in the program facilities if you want to stay. I've seen guys get busted back to 33rd Street because of shouting matches between inmates, for example. A few come back here again, but then they're careful to behave, because the other facility stinks. There's loud noise that keeps you from sleeping, it's cold, and there's no carpeting, so they like it here much better.

— An inmate in the Orange County jail

Because many inmates have poor reading skills, few job skills, and substance abuse problems, they frequently cannot find jobs after they are released or can find only low-paid or temporary work. Partly as a result, they often return to a life of crime.[1]

Conversely, studies have found that inmates who improve their educational level during confinement are less likely to reoffend than are inmates who do not. To be sure, many of these studies are inconclusive because they do not eliminate the possibility that more motivated inmates —who would have done better after release even without the programs—are the ones who improve their basic academic skills. However, a study of Federal inmates that attempted to adjust for this selection bias also found that inmates who participated in educational programs were less likely to reoffend.[2] Similarly, a study of Wisconsin inmates concluded that prison education programs were cost-effective because they reduced recidivism or increased the time before released inmates returned to prison.[3] State and Federal prisons typically provide educational courses similar to those included in these studies. By contrast, few jails offer these programs, primarily because they lack the money and suitable classroom space, but also because most jail inmates remain locked up only briefly.

The Orange County, Florida, Corrections Division overcame these barriers to providing intensive educational and vocational programming in its 3,300-bed jail—the ninth largest in the Nation—after it took over the facility from the sheriff in 1987. However, as the inmate's description above implies, setting up these programs required dramatic changes in how the jail was run. In fact, the entire jail now revolves largely around its educational and vocational programs—operationally, budgetarily, and architecturally.

Highlights

The Orange County, Florida, Corrections Division provides unusually intensive educational and vocational programs to most inmates in its 3,300-bed jail. Staffed by 70 fulltime instructors, programs include adult basic education, preparation for the general equivalency diploma (GED), vocational training, life skills development, psychoeducation groups, and substance abuse education. Courses are carefully tailored to the short periods of time that jail inmates are incarcerated and typically run 6 hours a day, 5 days a week.

Educational and vocational programming is the central component of a package of three interrelated innovations in the jail designed to work together to reduce corrections costs, improve inmate conduct, and lower recidivism. In addition to educational programming, the package includes:

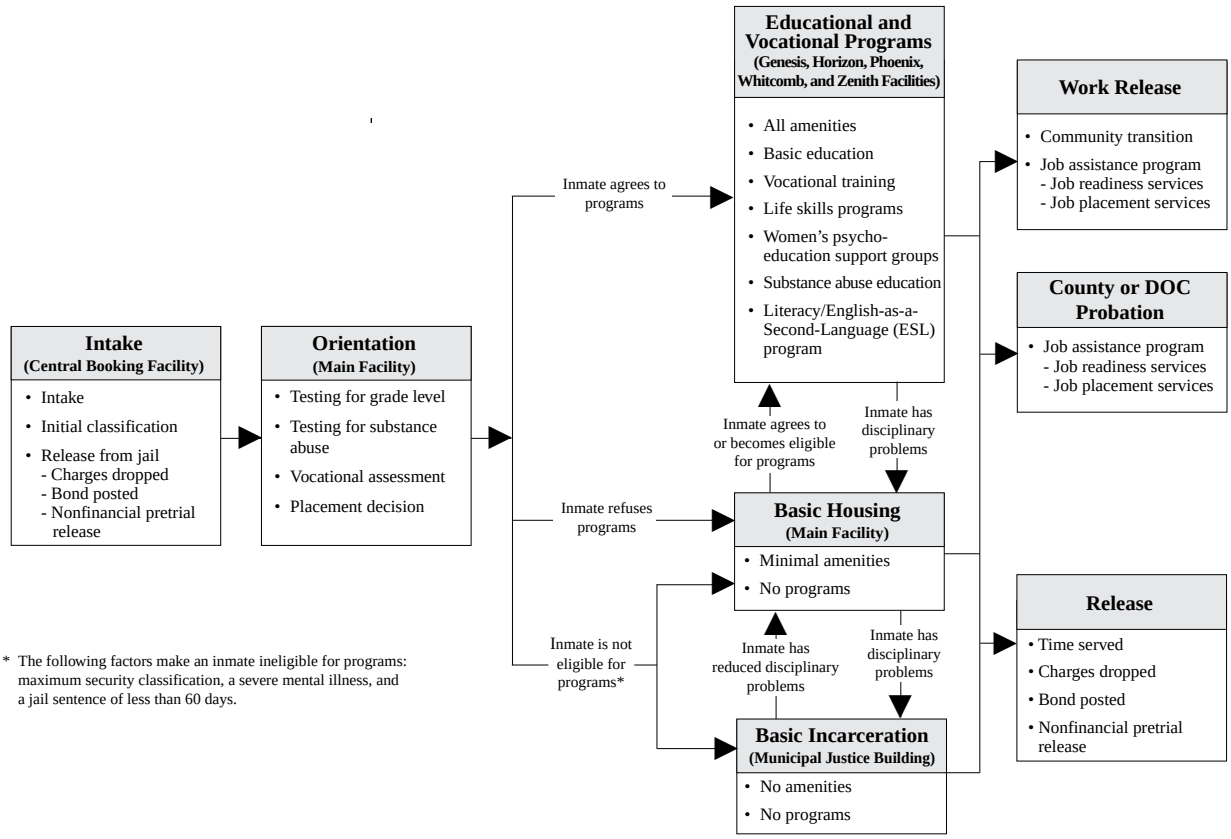
■ **Direct supervision** in facilities architecturally designed to allow maximum direct contact between staff and inmates without physical barriers.

■ **Behavioral incentives** in the form of valuable privileges inmates earn if they participate in programming and avoid misconduct.

The Corrections Division finances these innovations from the inmate welfare fund, local and Federal grants, and State education disbursements to the county school board for teaching adult basic education.

Evidence—much of it provided by an independent national auditing firm—suggests that the combination of programming, direct supervision, and incentives has reduced staffing needs, construction costs, and violent incidents, while it has increased inmate educational levels and job readiness. Another independent evaluation found that, as long as 18 months after release, inmates who were housed 6 to 45 days in direct supervision facilities were less likely to reoffend than inmates who were housed in these facilities less than 6 days.

Exhibit 1. Educational and Vocational Programming Process



Specifically, the jail:

■ Offers inmates **a wide range of structured educational and vocational programs** (from adult basic education to carpentry) that are crafted to accommodate inmates' short stays.

■ Provides **job readiness and placement services.**

■ Offers inmates **valuable incentives to participate** in programming—and to avoid misconduct.

■ Manages most inmates through **direct supervision** to contain costs, promote inmate responsibility, and allow for open areas that can be used as classrooms.

Each of these features is part of a comprehensive corrections strategy that enables programming to flourish at the same time that it saves the county money, keeps inmates occupied and out of trouble, and (it is hoped) reduces recidivism.

How the System Works

The principal steps in the jail's programming operations, beginning with intake, are presented in a flowchart in exhibit 1, "Educational and Vocational Programming Process." The levels of supervision and amenities in each type of facility are shown in exhibit 2, "Quality of Life in Jail Facilities."

Orientation: Testing, Assessment, and Placement

After leaving the central booking facility, inmates spend 5 days of orientation in the main facility of the jail complex, where they take the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to determine their grade level, the Substance Abuse/Life Circumstances Evaluation (SALCE) to determine whether they have a substance abuse problem, and a vocational needs and interests assessment to identify suitable job options after release.

After testing, inmates meet individually with an assessment staff member who explains the course offerings and the strong incentives for participating. Depending on the inmate's program preference and classification status, as well as available space, the inmate transfers to one of four facilities that offer the desired courses—along with relatively congenial living conditions:

■ Genesis: a one-story, 220-bed facility for men.

Exhibit 2. Quality of Life in Jail Facilities

Amenities/ Privileges	Educational and Vocational Programs (Genesis, Horizon, Phoenix, Whitcomb, and Zenith Facilities)	Basic Housing (Main Facility)	Basic Incarceration (Municipal Justice Building)
Direct Supervision	✓		
Air Conditioning	✓		
Non-dormitory Living	✓		
Coed Option	✓		
Contact Visits	✓		
Television	✓		
Additional Gain Time	✓		
Secure Personal Lockers	✓		
Newspapers	✓		
Library Services	✓		
Visits and Telephone Use	✓	✓ Limited	✓ Limited
Recreation Activities	✓	✓ Limited	✓ Limited
Commissary Privileges	✓	✓ Limited	✓ Limited

■ Horizon: a three-story, 768-bed coeducational facility.

■ Phoenix: a one-story, 288-bed facility for men attached to a vocational school.

■ Whitcomb: a one-story, 199-bed facility for women.

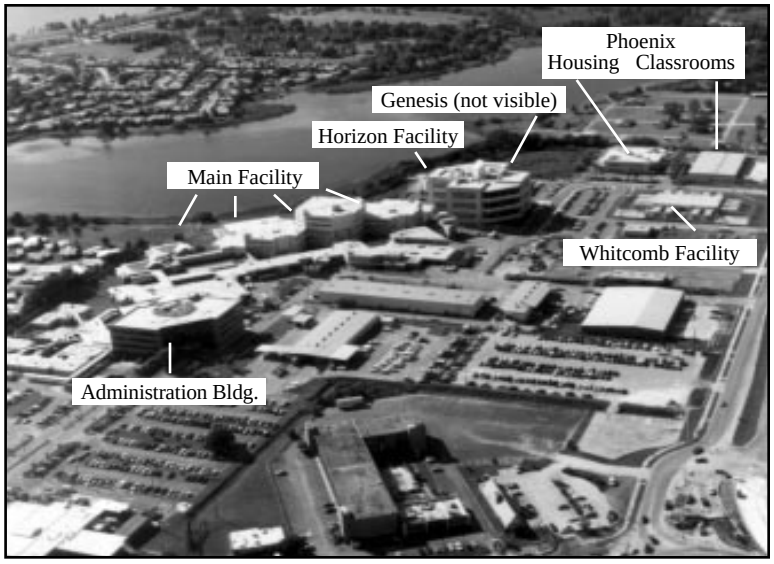
Mark Holmes, who supervises the jail's programs, explains, "The main facility holds inmates who are not expected to remain in the jail for more than 60 days, who are severely mentally ill, or who have a maximum security classification, together with eligible inmates who refuse to participate in a program." Inmates who test below a fourth-grade level are housed in Zenith, a special literacy or English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) dormitory in the main facility that offers the same amenities and privileges as the four program facilities. As soon as they raise their test scores, these inmates may move to one of the four program facilities. (See the aerial photo of the Orange County Jail.)

Program Offerings

The Orange County jail offers five types of courses: (1) basic education, (2) vocational training, and (3) life skills development, each of which involves 6 hours of classes, 5 days a week; (4) women's psychoeducation support groups, which meet daily for about 2 hours; and (5) substance abuse education classes, which meet for 90 minutes on alternating days (see "Principal Education Programs Offered in the Jail").

Inmates may join any course in progress if space is available. Nevertheless, Holmes reports, "There may be delays." After orientation, if there is a waiting list for inmates to enroll in the program of their choice, the classification officer must assign them to another program that has an opening.

Furthermore, while the Phoenix facility holds 288 beds, there are only 200 vocational slots. Administrators added a GED program and substance abuse



The Orange County Jail offers educational and vocational programs housed in specially designed facilities.

education to the facility's offerings to occupy inmates until a vocational slot opens up. Despite these shortcomings, few inmates experience delays or downtime.

A life skills instructor videotapes a mock job interview with an inmate.

Job Assistance Programs

The jail has two prerelease job assistance programs. The first program, staffed by four full-time corrections employees, helps inmates search for work and monitors the job performance of the 15 percent of former inmates who are placed on county probation. The second program, staffed by two job developers from Mid-Florida Technical School, helps inmates enrolled in Phoenix vocational courses find employment and addresses their medical, housing, and transportation needs.

Job developers report that it can be difficult to motivate released inmates to continue their education, look for work, or remain employed. One job developer estimated that "as many as three-quarters of inmates placed in jobs while in work release or on probation quit after criminal justice supervision ends." Even the most motivated inmates often face debilitating obstacles to continuing their education or remaining on the job, ranging from not being able to afford the necessary housing, child care, or transportation, to lacking the education and job skills to qualify for anything other than minimum-wage jobs.

"We are trying very hard to solve these problems," Mark Holmes reports. "For example, two county social workers are now operating in the jail trying to address inmates' social needs upon release; case managers are starting to talk about potential problems related to release at the *beginning* of an inmate's confinement; and we have arranged for a local homeless shelter that normally closes at 9 p.m. to accept inmates at any time of the night if they arrive with a copy of a special admissions form that we developed with the shelter."

Principal Education Programs Offered In the Jail

An instructor helps inmates prepare for their general equivalency diploma (GED) exam.

Basic education. All four program facilities—Genesis, Horizon, Phoenix, and Whitcomb—offer adult basic education (ABE) and general equivalency diploma (GED) preparation. Whitcomb also offers remedial reading instruction. Basic literacy and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) courses are available in the main facility.

Vocational training. In the Phoenix facility, male and female inmates attend classes in auto maintenance, desktop publishing, carpentry, culinary arts, warehousing, electrical wiring, and other occupations and trades 6 hours a day. Every vocational course devotes time to resume writing, mock job interviews, and other job readiness skills.

Life skills programs. Available in three of the program facilities, life skills courses address employability skills, job search techniques, money management, and parenting and relationship skills. The courses are self-paced, and the sequence of topics is flexible.

Women's psychoeducational support groups. Under the supervision of a professor of social work, master's-level interns from the University of Central Florida conduct 5 weeks of 90-minute small group sessions two to three times a week in the Horizon facility. One-on-one counseling to promote self-esteem, sober living, anger management, and basic life skills is also offered.

Substance abuse education. Inmates in all four program facilities whose Substance Abuse/Life Circumstances Evaluation (SALCE) indicates they have an alcohol or other drug problem must enroll in Moral Reconation Therapy (MRT), a nontraditional psychoeducational course for use with substance abusers, batterers, and other individuals with "resistant" personalities. Through a series of 16 structured tasks and workbook exercises, MRT seeks to reeducate these individuals behaviorally and socially and raise their level of moral reasoning. MRT changes the way individuals act by changing the way they think.

What Is So Special About the Programming Innovations?

As noted above, the Orange County Corrections Division educational/vocational effort is much more than just an impressive array of program offerings. Several other features are

indispensable to the programs' achievements: incentives for participation, direct supervision, active support by corrections officers, cooperation from schools, and programs tailored to short jail stays.

Incentives

Although inmates may refuse to join any of the jail's programs, administrators have created powerful incentives for participating. According to Gillian Hobbs, assistant manager of the Community Corrections Department, "Less than 5 percent of inmates refuse to join. We have an excellent balance of positive incentives for desired behavior and negative consequences for inappropriate behavior. Offering programs without these incentives would have little effect because participation would be minimal."

■ **Positive incentives.** Sentenced inmates in Florida earn 5 days of gain time (reduction in sentence) every month if they follow the rules, and pretrial inmates have 5 days a month credited to any jail sentence they are given if convicted. However, inmates in program facilities earn an *additional 6 days* of gain time every month, for a total of 11 days. While inmates can also earn the additional 6 days as trusties in the main facility, many find the work boring. As one inmate observed, "You work 9 hours a day for free [as a trusty] and gain nothing. Here [in a program facility], you get to go to classes—you get something out of the system."

■ **Negative consequences.** Inmates who refuse to participate remain in the main jail facility where—unlike in the four program facilities—they are denied contact visits and television, have fewer visits and less use of the telephone, are permitted recreation only 3 hours a week, and are limited to buying only personal hygiene items at the commissary. Inmates in the main facility are housed in uncarpeted dormitories without secure personal lockers and with a relatively high noise level. Every inmate becomes intimately, if briefly, familiar with these spartan conditions during orientation.

Once transferred to a program facility, inmates can be sent back to the main facility at any time for misconduct ranging from shouting matches to chronic class tardiness. One instructor reported, "After an officer woke an absent student, the inmate went up to the teacher and snarled, 'Don't go waking *me* up again!' The teacher had the jail send the inmate back to the main facility the same day." Administrators can also ship inmates in the main facility who misbehave to the downtown jail, which offers even fewer privileges—and no air conditioning.

According to Don Bjoring, manager of Community Corrections, "Probably 10 to 30 percent of inmates in program facilities get bounced back to basic housing. But classification officers in the main facility routinely ask all inmates who have not broken any rules during the previous 2 weeks if they want to return to a program facility. Most inmates ask—some even beg—to return."

One inmate explained, "Guys think they can take it there [in the main facility], but they learn it's awful. It's macho to say you don't care [about conditions there], but it's eight men in a four-person cell with no privacy or space for yourself."

"Ironically," Mark Holmes points out, "it would be impossible for the education programs to continue if *every* inmate were motivated to participate. The jail could not sustain its old-style main facility, which we need as an incentive for inmates to participate in programs and avoid misconduct."

Direct Supervision

Programming also could not thrive without direct supervision in the four program facilities. Direct supervision is an inmate management system that combines three main features:

■ **An architectural design that permits direct contact between staff and inmates** without physical barriers (bars, glass, doors) and uses standard commercial furniture, plumbing fixtures, and security hardware. Typically, buildings have two or more "pods," each consisting of two-person cells that open onto a large all-purpose open area that serves as both a classroom and a dayroom. One or two corrections officers staff a desk within each pod and

A direct supervision common area with carpeting and upholstered chairs does triple duty as a television viewing area, classroom, and place to socialize, all within easy observation of a corrections officer sitting at her desk checking her computer records.

circulate as needed. Inmates are free during the day to go back and forth from their cells to the common area.

■ **Behavioral incentives that motivate inmates to participate in programs and follow all rules.** Direct supervision helps officers quickly apply the incentives previously described, because constant contact with inmates enables them to observe brewing misconduct very easily.

■ **A behavior-based classification system that places inmates in the least restrictive possible jail environment based on their obeying the rules and participating in programs.** This contrasts with assigning inmates to minimum, medium, and maximum security areas based exclusively on the seriousness of the crime they have committed (or been charged with). Case managers and classification officers monitor inmates' progress with face-to-face meetings. They log class attendance, infractions, and other pertinent information into a computer database that all staff share so that any inmate who breaks the rules is reassigned swiftly to the main facility.

Programming, incentives, and direct supervision are all indispensable for the Orange County approach to work. For example, direct supervision may lead to increased disturbances unless inmates are kept busy—something that 6 hours of programs a day takes care of and the facilities' architecture makes possible. However, incentives motivate most inmates to participate in programming, which in turn keeps them busy.

Do inmates who may feel coerced into participating in educational and vocational programs learn anything? Several inmates think so, reporting that, while they would not have participated if it were not for the incentives, they were glad they did. As one inmate said, "Guys are angry when they get here [in the jail], so they don't want to take programs, but the classes turn out to be interesting and valuable. So it's good they force you to take them. When you come in, you're not thinking about programs, but then you start working them and you learn from them." There is also clinical evidence that individuals subject to compulsory drug abuse treatment have reduced criminal recidivism rates.[4] Finally, regardless of their motivation, hundreds of inmates in the Orange County jail have earned their general equivalency diploma (GED).

An inmate practices basic carpentry skills in the Phoenix facility vocational program.

Active Support by Corrections Officers

Conflict between security officers and program staff in corrections facilities is a classic problem. Corrections officers claim that programs get in their way and compromise security, while program staff complain that officers cavalierly yank inmates out of class and interrupt instruction with counts, searches, and lockdowns. However, most officers in the Orange County jail's four program facilities cooperate with the programs because they believe they experience fewer assaults and lawsuits than do officers in the main facility. Some officers report they enjoy seeing inmates learning rather than playing basketball or watching television all day. One female officer said, "I'm proud to see women learning how to change a car's oil and filter." When instructors leave for semester break, some officers tell them, "Hurry back!" Most officers support the programs with actions as well as words:

■ When instructors report an absent student, officers immediately wake up the inmate and escort him or her to class. Officers often circulate through classroom areas to stop inappropriate behavior, such as an inmate putting his feet on the desk or dozing during class. They also help new teachers write up incident reports.

■ Corrections officers saw how well Genesis—the jail's first direct supervision facility—was working out. When construction began on the Horizon facility, the jail director was swamped with requests for transfers from officers in the main facility's basic housing units. Conversely, when the county

Corrections Division was considering turning Genesis into an all-female facility, its male officers began fighting the plan because they hated the idea of being transferred back to traditional housing.

■ According to one inmate, "Officers care about you here in Horizon. Every day, one officer who knows I have epilepsy asks me if I'm OK. When I needed to call my parents badly one day, another officer let me use the office phone."

■ A lieutenant in the main building asked that programming be expanded to the basic housing units—as an inmate management tool. Ironically, it is program staff who have to resist these requests.

Officers who work in the main facility must cooperate with the innovations because they need to observe and record the positive and negative inmate conduct to determine whether inmates are eligible for transfer to a program facility. Main facility officers also need to avoid the temptation to transfer inmates to program facilities simply to reduce overcrowding or to get rid of inmates who are a nuisance or who continually pester them to be transferred.

Cooperation From Schools

The jail's educational innovations would not have been possible without close collaboration with the Orange County Public School Board, which runs the county's adult literacy and technical education programs. The State of Florida, which funds these efforts, requires counties to provide free basic education to disadvantaged adult residents. Every year the head of the county school system recommends to the school board's advisory council that eliminating illiteracy among inmates and providing them with vocational education be made a high priority in deciding how to allocate services among competing educational needs in the county. As a result, one-quarter of the total adult education system budget for Mid-Florida Technical is allocated to providing instruction in the Orange County jail. An assistant director of the Orange County Technical Education Centers serves as the jail's full-time, onsite "principal," supervising 70 full-time instructors.

Most instructors like working in the jail—indeed, many prefer it to regular teaching because they have more control over discipline. According to one teacher, "If you kick someone out of class [in regular schools], even if the student gets suspended he's back in class a few days later. But if you remove someone here [in the jail], they go back to the main facility for at least 2 weeks and then, if they do come back to the program facility, they are never placed with the same teacher."

Programs Tailored to Short Jail Stays

Jail and school administrators have implemented several strategies to help ensure that inmates are offered the maximum possible amount of useful educational benefits before they are released.

Focus on core competencies. The jail focuses first and foremost on providing inmates with basic reading skills. For example, the vocational programs devote time to raising inmates' TABE scores to give them the academic skills, like math, needed for jobs in the trades. Similarly, while there is a generally accepted order regarding which skills should be taught first, second, and so on in life skills classes, instructors teach the skills they feel are most critical first—for example, stress management and coping with anger—in case inmates are released before the course ends.

Women inmates in the Horizon facility life skills course use computers to pursue topics of interest at their own pace, such as job search techniques and money management strategies.

Self-paced course work. In most of the jail's courses, inmates can work at their own pace, either on a computer or in a workbook, or by means of independent study monitored by the instructor. As a result, quick or motivated learners are not held back by slower or less energetic students.

Intensive course work. Most courses involve 6 hours of classes a day, 5 days a week. As a result, although the typical inmate assigned to a direct supervision facility remains in jail for about 60 days, even this short stay enables them to attend over 250 hours of classes before release. Each inmate in Phoenix, which typically houses inmates for a shorter, 45-day period, attends an average of 192 hours of vocational classes before release—the equivalent of nearly five 40-hour weeks.

Identification of "early exit" points. Because of the shorter average stay of Phoenix inmates, jail and school ad-

ministrators try to identify technical skills in local demand that Phoenix instructors can teach in a short period of time. School administrators then restructure their standard 9-week vocational courses (the number of weeks required for State reimbursement) to focus initially on quickly learned skills. For example, instructors altered the automobile repair course to focus on the quickly taught skills of changing oil and filters after a local automobile repair chain reported these were the skills it needed most.

After release, interested Phoenix inmates can transfer easily into Mid-Florida Technical School's Post-secondary Technical School to complete their education or to enter an apprenticeship program. This is because the Phoenix facility's vocational offerings duplicate the school's curriculum and because inmates participating in Phoenix courses are already officially enrolled in the school. Furthermore, under Florida guidelines, ex-offenders can obtain tuition waivers or financial assistance if they continue their education at the technical school.

Short-term substance abuse counseling. Most inmates are released too quickly to attend traditional substance abuse counseling groups. As a result, every program facility provides a self-paced substance abuse education course, Moral Reconation Therapy (MRT) (see "Principal Education Programs Offered in the Jail" on page 5 for an explanation of MRT).

Does It Work?

The combination of programming and direct supervision has achieved a number of noteworthy milestones.

Program Funding Sources and Major Costs

Inmate Welfare Fund: $394,000 a Year*

- $199,000 for student registration fees.
- $15,000 for school expenses such as student workbooks.
- $180,000 for substance abuse education instruction.

County School Board Funding (via State Funding): $3.6 Million a Year

- Salaries of 70 instructors.
- Purchase of half of vocational equipment for Phoenix facility.
- Two full-time staff for the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE).
- Two full-time job developers.

U.S. Department of Education Grant, 1994–1996: $241,580 a Year

- Two life skills instructors and a program coordinator for Horizon facility.
- Computers and curriculum software for life skills program in Horizon facility.

University of Central Florida: $30,000 matching grant to supervise women's psychoeducation groups

Volunteers: Instructors, community members, chaplains, and corrections officers volunteer their time to plan and teach a special course for juvenile inmates who test at a 12th-grade reading level.

* Inmate welfare funds come primarily from a surcharge that jails place on collect calls inmates make to their families and from profits realized when jails purchase commissary goods at discount but charge inmates the prevailing retail price. In effect, because most inmates have no savings or income of their own, their families provide the money that supports the fund. Some inmate advocates have questioned the way correctional facilities use these funds, but few critics are likely to object to spending the money on educational and vocational courses for inmates.

■ **Staff reductions.** The four program facilities have a much higher inmate-to-security-staff ratio (5.6:1) than either the main facility (3.2:1) or comparable nearby jails (3.2:1 to 3.8:1).

■ **Operating cost reductions.** According to an independent evaluation by a national accounting firm, the daily operating cost per inmate in the Orange County jail is lower than at four other Florida jails of comparable size:[5]

Orange County	$60.40
Broward County	$66.68
Dade County	$71.87
Palm Beach County	$74.95

Comparing costs with those of the next most inexpensive county (Broward) shows that the daily savings per inmate to Orange County of $6.28 add up to a significant amount when multiplied by 3,300 inmates over 365 days—$7,564,260 (see "Program Funding Sources and Major Costs").

■ **Construction cost savings.** The average per-bed construction cost of the jail's indirect supervision facilities was nearly $50,000 (1996 dollars), while the average cost for the four direct supervision facilities was just over $30,000. Based on these figures, the independent accounting firm concluded that if all the jail's direct supervision housing had been built as indirect supervision beds, it would have cost the county approximately $28 million more (1996 dollars)(see "Are the Reduced Jail Costs Due to Cost Shifting or to Real Savings?").

■ **Use-of-force reductions.** The number of incidents requiring the use of force (for example, takedowns) declined from 3.59 per 100 inmates in 1987, the year before programming and direct supervision were introduced, to 2.02 in 1989, the year after their introduction, to 1.30 in 1995. Although about half of all inmates are housed in direct supervision facilities, only 45—8.4 percent—of the 533 uses of force in 1995 occurred in these four facilities.

■ **Low rates of violence.** A study by the University of Central Florida

found that direct supervision units had much lower rates of suicide, inmate injury, staff injury, fighting, use of force, and disciplinary reports in 1995 than did the basic housing units.[6] For example, the average use-of-force rate in direct supervision areas was 3.2 compared with nearly 30 in regular housing. The rates for death, homicide, and suicide per 1,000 inmates in 1995 were also lower in the entire Orange County jail than for other similar size jails (jails with a rated capacity above 2,000) in Florida, in the southeastern United States, and nationally.

■ **Educational improvement.** More than 4,200 inmates attended at least some education classes in 1995; 15 percent of these inmates completed the life skills course, 3 percent the women's psychoeducation groups, and 1 percent substance abuse education. Fourteen percent earned their GED. Eighty-four percent of inmates who took the GED test in the jail earned their diploma, compared with 70 percent of test takers in the county as a whole. Women in Horizon's psychoeducation groups were significantly less depressed and anxious after completing the course compared with women inmates waiting to enroll in the groups. The groups' supervisor said that several officers have told her that members become much more manageable after a few sessions. In fact, during the 12 months after the introduction of the psychoeducation groups and the life skills programs, Horizon experienced a 20 percent reduction in the number of female inmates—94 versus 121—sent back to the main facility for discipline problems, compared with the previous 12-month period.

Are the Reduced Jail Costs Due to Cost Shifting or to Real Savings?

As shown in "Program Funding Sources and Major Costs," the State of Florida provides the Orange County Jail with $3.6 million, principally for 70 full-time instructors. The inmate welfare fund pays for the instructors who teach the jail's substance abuse education program. The question might therefore be asked, have the innovations actually reduced the costs of running the jail or have they simply shifted the cost to the State and to the inmates (or their families)? The answer is, some of both.

Jail administrators readily acknowledge that for direct supervision to work, inmates need to be kept busy, and it is the programming—paid for largely by the State and, to a much lesser extent, by the inmate welfare fund—that prevents inmate idleness. Without the programming, the jail would have to hire additional corrections officers to handle the disciplinary problems idleness might create. In this sense, the jail has reduced corrections costs to Orange County by taking advantage of available State and inmate funds to provide the programs that avoid the need for additional security staff.

However, the innovations also make it less costly to run the jail irrespective of State and inmate support. An independent evaluation of the jail's costs conducted in 1996 by a national accounting firm found that, if the same number of inmates who are housed in the jail's direct supervision facilities were housed in indirect supervision facilities, it would cost the county approximately $9.5 million more each year. Yet the State and inmate contributions to providing programming total less than $4 million. This suggests that the jail saves $5.5 million a year in staffing costs that cannot be attributed to cost shifting but instead reflect the advantages of direct supervision coupled with incentives and educational programming. As jail administrators point out, the instructors are not in the jail on the evening and night shifts, on weekends and holidays, and during semester breaks.

Furthermore, to the extent that dollars have been shifted from the State and the inmate welfare fund to pay for providing educational programs, the money from these sources has not come from increased taxes to the public or increased fees to inmates.

Finally, irrespective of any reductions in the costs of operating the jail, the county has saved millions of dollars in construction costs by not having to build and furnish more expensive indirect supervision facilities.

Recidivism. Finally, on the critical measure of whether the programs reduce recidivism, the University of Central Florida study found promising results. The researchers compared postrelease bookings (that is, rearrests) into the Orange County jail among 600 inmates transferred into direct supervision units. They divided the inmates into 3 groups of 200 each according to the amount of time spent in direct supervision:

Group 1 **Least time in direct supervision.** 167 of these inmates spent no time in direct supervision housing. The remaining 33 spent 0 to 5 days in direct supervision housing before being returned to regular housing or released.

Group 2 **Moderate time in direct supervision.** All 200 of these inmates spent from 6 to 45 days (the average was 23 days) in a direct supervision facility.

Group 3 **Most time in direct supervision.** All 200 of these inmates spent 46 days or more (the average was 102 days) in a direct supervision facility.

The researchers used time in direct supervision housing as a proxy for program participation because, for most of their stay in these facilities, inmates were required to participate in at least one program.

The researchers followed the inmates for a minimum of 18 months after release. Although the recidivism rates of groups 1 and 3 did not differ significantly, ex-offenders in group 2 had statistically significant fewer bookings than did ex-offenders in either group 1 or group 3 (see exhibit 3). Statistical tests suggested that longer jail terms reduced recidivism only if the offender spent at least a moderate amount of time in a direct supervision facility. The number of days in custody significantly predicted the number of postrelease bookings only among inmates who remained at least 6 days in direct supervision housing. The researchers have not yet determined why a moderate amount of programming (6–45 days) had a greater effect on recidivism than did longer periods (46 or more days).[7]

How the Program Developed

The stage was set for innovation at the Orange County Corrections Division in 1987 when, in an unusual move, the sheriff decided to turn the jail over to the county (see "The County Commissioners Play a Crucial Role"). After taking over the jail, the county board commissioned a study that predicted that by 1998 the jail population would increase from 3,300 to 5,000–6,000. To accommodate the increase would have required $50 million in new construction costs, with needed additional staffing raising the price tag still higher.

The commissioners hired Tom Allison in February 1987 to head the new corrections division precisely because he convinced them that he could run the

Exhibit 3. Recidivism by Time Spent in Direct Supervision

Direct Supervision Time	Group 1 (0–5 days)	Group 2 (6–45 days)	Group 3 (46 or more days)
Total number of postrelease bookings*	379	248	289
Recidivism: Average number of postrelease bookings per inmate**	1.9	1.24	1.45
Reduction in recidivism compared to group 1	NA	34.7%	23.7%

*Subjects released before July 30, 1995, were tracked for 18 months after release.
** Some subjects were rearrested many times, some only once, and some not at all.

The County Commissioners Play A Crucial Role

The chair of the seven-member Board of Orange County Commissioners, not a sheriff as in most jurisdictions, runs the local correctional system. The board has supported the jail's innovations largely for four reasons:

■ **Costs.** The combination of programming, direct supervision, and State funding for instructors, along with a decline in jail population, has kept county corrections costs relatively low. (See the section "Does It Work?" on page 9).

■ **Security.** Escapes have not increased since programming and direct supervision were instituted, and they are no more frequent than at other nearby jails. Equally important, no escapee has attacked any tourists visiting the county's numerous theme parks—a major source of county revenue.

■ **Get-tough approach to criminals.** According to Howard Tipton, the deputy county administrator, politicians who tour the jail always ask, "How do you survive politically doing this—providing inmates with such pleasant living conditions?" Tipton's answer: "This isn't a liberal initiative; we balance punishment and treatment." In fact, Tom Allison, the former Corrections Division director, removed exercise weights from the entire jail, eliminated television, basketball, and cards from basic housing units in the main facility, and expanded the institution's work crews. Furthermore, the county introduced medical copayments. Tipton adds, "The treatment inmates receive is directly related to their conduct: the better they behave, the better they are treated."

■ **Potential for reducing recidivism.** The commissioners directed that jail administrators arrange for independent evaluations to determine whether direct supervision and programming have achieved their promised potential for reducing recidivism, thereby decreasing criminal justice system costs.

jail cost effectively (see "The Corrections Division Director Was the Driving Force"). Allison proposed to use the money available in the county's capital budget to experiment with constructing a small direct supervision facility. Its proposed built-in classrooms for educational programs would make it possible to both manage inmates and reduce staffing costs. In July 1988, Genesis opened. After witnessing the success of Genesis, the commissioners approved Allison's request to construct the other three direct supervision buildings.

From the beginning, Allison worked to persuade the county school board that inmates should receive priority treatment because State statutes required the board to provide adult basic education services to disadvantaged adults. The board had been offering classes in the jail for 23 years when Allison was appointed, but those classes made up less than 5 percent of its adult education activity. Furthermore, its programs were designed primarily to keep inmates occupied. Allison argued successfully that the only way to keep inmates from returning to jail is to "send them out different people from when they came in." This reasoning helped persuade the school board advisory council (composed largely of private-sector business people) and the director of one of its technical education centers to shift more school board resources to the jail.

Setting up the programs and learning to live with direct supervision generated considerable conflict among everyone involved. Because no officers volunteered to staff Genesis, the building was staffed forcibly on the basis of seniority. Some officers quit rather than switch. Instructors raised union issues to oppose the use of dayrooms in the jail as classroom space. Until the incentive system was developed, many inmates who chose Genesis either did not appreciate the living conditions or, if they did, still broke the rules.

Over time, a team focus evolved in which each group became less self-centered and had less of a need to be in control. This transformation occurred because Tom Allison employed a judicious mix of reasoning, exhortation, training, and compulsion. In addition, he brought in a small group of consultants to promote team building. Perhaps most important, the innovations proved their value as a management tool for corrections staff, as an educational priority for school board officials and instructors, and as an improvement in living conditions for most inmates.

The Corrections Division Director Was the Driving Force

Another essential component of the Orange County story is the leadership of a determined director of corrections. Tom Allison, appointed in 1987 and director until 1997, was committed from the start to providing inmates with programs that would give them both improved self-esteem and marketable reading and vocational skills as the only realistic course for preventing recidivism. However, Director Allison was determined to provide these skills as part of a package of innovations that would include direct supervision, behavioral incentives, and a behavior-based classification system.

Allison knew that the innovations had to reduce corrections costs if he hoped to gain support from both the county commissioners and the public for inmate programs. As a result, rather than focusing on the programs' benefits to inmates or the program's future and uncertain impact on recidivism, he emphasized that the changes would reduce construction and staffing costs to the county. Allison also believed the innovations could be successful in the long run only by delegating a great deal of control to midlevel managers and line staff. For example, he gave officers in program facilities the authority to transfer inmates who engage in misconduct to the main facility. Inmates can only appeal this decision to the facility shift supervisor, who usually sides with the officers. He encouraged senior managers to set up planning, accountability, and consistency teams, made up of line staff, to overcome their own difficulties. According to Allison, "One person can't sell change within a jail; everyone has to take the initiative." Reflecting this delegation of authority, Howard Tipton, the deputy county administrator, reported approvingly, "Tom doesn't know what's going on in the jail today [1996], but that's OK; we pay him for what's going to go on tomorrow and the next day."

Can Other Counties Set Up Similar Programs?

Replicating Orange County's accomplishments will require considerable effort. However, the payoffs are likely to be equally rewarding. The following conditions appear to be the minimum requirements for achieving what this jail has done:

■ **Strong support from the top.** Fearing negative media coverage, most sheriffs, as elected officials, tend to focus on avoiding potential incidents such as escapes or violence and shy away from the political risks involved in radical change. As a result, jurisdictions in which the sheriff runs the jail may need a strong mayor, chief judicial officer, or other key official to support the changes—and to share the heat when problems arise.

■ **Leadership skills.** Jurisdictions need a sheriff or corrections director with the vision, determination, and management and public relations skills to make the innovations work and to see them through the tough times they will encounter. The sheriff or director in turn needs the authority to pick qualified managers from inside or outside the corrections department to implement the changes.

■ **Constructing or retrofitting facilities.** Orange County was fortunate in having a large capital budget at its disposal combined with the need to expand bed space. As a result, it could move immediately into constructing direct supervision facilities with built-in classrooms. Jurisdictions not in these circumstances will need to retrofit their existing jail buildings or purchase or lease suitable structures.

■ **A comprehensive package of innovations.** Programming needs to be integrated into a comprehensive package that includes direct supervision, delegation of considerable decision-making to the manager and line level, collaboration with local schools (which may be more difficult than in Orange County if the State does not mandate that public educators serve the disadvantaged), and tapping into every possible source of funding.

■ **No overcrowding.** The jail cannot be so overcrowded that there is no bed space in the old-style part of the jail to which inmates who break the rules in program facilities can be transferred.

Another key to success is to begin small. Orange County began by constructing the 220-bed Genesis facility as a test case for the innovations. Even if a jail has only one building and funds are not available to construct a direct supervision structure, it may be possible to retrofit one section of the existing facility to test the innovations.

Some jails have already introduced some of the major features of the Orange County package of innovations. Several have developed extensive educational programs for inmates. With nine full-time instructors and more than 200 volunteers, the Safer Foundation's PACE Institute in Chicago has provided GED, pre-GED, and literacy services to over 15,000 inmates in the Cook County Jail since the 1970s.

The National Institute of Corrections and the American Jail Association have each identified more than 100 facilities in more than 24 States that have implemented direct supervision. In some cases, as in Larimer County, Colorado, sheriffs have retrofitted existing podular remote facilities by leaving doors open or removing them and placing corrections officers in the housing units.

The National Institute of Corrections has identified at least 16 additional facilities that have been converted to direct supervision. Still other counties have built new direct supervision facilities. A few jails, including facilities in San Francisco and Contra Costa Counties, California; Broward County, Florida; and Larimer County, Colorado, have combined direct supervision with formal programs (see "Sources for Further Information").

Finally, Orange County has shown that the benefits of educational programming and direct supervision can be substantial—more than enough to offset the work involved in implementing the innovations: reductions in staff, operating costs, and inmate violence and improvements in inmate education and employability. If jurisdictions need to construct or obtain additional bed space, they can save considerable money by building or leasing facilities that can accommodate programming and direct supervision. Finally, the innovations may reduce recidivism—perhaps the most important payoff of all.

Notes

1. Anderson, D.B., R.E. Schumacker, and S.L. Anderson, "Releasee Characteristics and Parole," *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* 17 (1991):133–145; Berk, R.A., K.J. Lenihan, and P.H. Rossi, "Crime and Poverty: Some Experimental Evidence from Ex-Offenders," *American Sociological Review* 45 (1980):766–786; Freeman, R.B., "Crime and Unemployment," in *Crime and Public Policy*, ed. James Q. Wilson, San Francisco: ICS Press, 1983:89–106.

2. Harer, M.D., "Recidivism Among Federal Prison Releasees in 1987: A Preliminary Report." Unpublished paper, Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons, Office of Research and Evaluation, March 1994.

3. Piehl, A.M., "Learning While Doing Time," Unpublished paper, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government, April 1994.

4. Leukefeld, C.G., and F.M. Tims, eds., *Compulsory Treatment of Drug Abuse: Research and Clinical Practice*, NIDA Research Monograph 86, Rockville, Maryland: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1988; Anglin, M.D., and H.Yih-Ing, "Treatment of Drug Abuse," in *Drugs and Crime*, ed. Tonry, M., and J.Q. Wilson, Chicago:

Sources for Further Information

The Orange County Corrections Division distributes a narrative and videotape of the programs at its Horizon facility, as well as literature describing the jail innovations. Staff also give guided tours of program facilities and classrooms. Contact:

Mark S. Holmes
Senior Unit Supervisor
Programs Unit
Community Corrections Department
Orange County Corrections Division
P.O. Box 4970
Orlando, FL 32802–4970
Telephone: 407–836–3375

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is the principal research, evaluation, and development agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. For information about the NIJ's efforts in corrections, program development, and corporate partnership development, contact:

Marilyn C. Moses
Program Manager
National Institute of Justice
810 Seventh Street, N.W., Seventh Floor
Washington, DC 20531
Telephone: 202–514–6205
Fax: 202–307–6256

The National Institute of Justice established **the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS)** in 1972 to serve as a national and international clearinghouse for the exchange of criminal justice information. For more information about topical searches, bibliographies, custom searches, and other available services, contact:

NCJRS
P.O. Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849–6000
Telephone: 800–851–3420 (8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Eastern time, Monday through Friday)

For specific criminal justice questions or requests via Internet, e-mail: askncjrs@ncjrs.org

The Office of Correctional Education (OCE) within the U.S. Department of Education was created by Congress in 1991 to provide technical assistance, grant funding, and research data to the corrections and correctional education fields. To speak with a program specialist or be placed on OCE's mailing list to receive grant announcements, OCE's quarterly newsletter, and other publications, contact:

Office of Correctional Education
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue S.W.
MES 4529
Washington, DC 20202–7242
Telephone: 202–205–5621
Fax: 202–401–2615
World Wide Web site: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/OCE

The National Institute of Corrections Jails Division offers free technical assistance on inmate programming and direct supervision and a 30-hour jails orientation workshop on direct supervision. Ask for the publications, *NIC Jails Division: A National Resource for Local Jails* and the *NIC Service Plan* for the current year. The institute also offers a Podular Direct Supervision Jails Information Packet and a videotape for sheriffs, county commissioners, jail planners, and line staff that highlights the basic concepts of direct supervision. Contact:

NIC Information Center
1860 Industrial Circle, Suite A
Longmont, CO 80501
Telephone: 800–877–1461
Fax: 303–682–0558

The National Institute of Corrections' **Office of Correctional Job Training and Placement (OCJTP)** was created in March 1995 to

- Cooperate with and coordinate the efforts of other Federal agencies in the areas of job training and placement.
- Collect and disseminate information on offender job training and placement programs, accomplishments, and employment outcomes.
- Provide training to develop staff competencies in working with offenders and ex-offenders.
- Provide technical assistance to State and local training and employment agencies.

For more information, contact:

John Moore
Coordinator
Office of Correctional Job Training and Placement
National Institute of Corrections
320 First Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20534
Telephone: 800–995–6423 ext. 147 or 202–307–3361 ext. 147

The American Jail Association (AJA) provides regional training seminars, onsite technical assistance, and training materials related to inmate programming, direct supervision, and other corrections topics for a modest fee. The Association also sponsors an Annual Training Conference & Jail Expo. The Association's magazine, *American Jails*, includes articles on jail innovations, such as "Direct Supervision: A Systems Approach to Jail Management," Spring 1989, pages 67–71. Contact:

Stephen J. Ingley
Executive Director
American Jail Association
2053 Day Road, Suite 100
Hagerstown, MD 21740–9795
Telephone: 301–790–3930
Fax: 301–790–2941
e-mail: aja@corrections.com
World Wide Web site: http://www.corrections.com/aja

The Correctional Education Association (CEA) is affiliated with the American Correctional Association as an international professional organization serving education program needs within the field of corrections. Membership includes teachers, librarians, counselors, and other education professionals. Members receive a quarterly journal and newsletter, an annual directory, and a yearbook. Annual conferences are held in each of CEA's nine regions and many of its State chapters. One of the regions hosts an international conference with workshops on successful instructional strategies. Contact:

Alice Tracey
Assistant Director
Correctional Education Association
4380 Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, MD 20706
Telephone: 301–918–1915
Fax: 301–918–1846

University of Chicago Press, 1990:393–460; Falkin, G.P., H.K. Wexler, and D.S. Lipton, "Drug Treatment in State Prisons," in *Treating Drug Problems*, Vol 2, ed. Gerstein, D.R., and H.J. Harwood, Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1992:89–131.

5. The auditors found that per-inmate costs in the Orange County jail were higher than those of two other Florida jails. However, one of the other jails, in Hillsborough County, had at least one overcrowded facility; it arguably costs less per inmate to operate an overcrowded than an at-capacity facility, because the number of corrections staff and fixed costs remain constant no matter how many inmates are housed. The other jail, in Duval County, had only 694 staff compared with 864 in Palm Beach, 1,259 in Broward County, 2,349 in Metro Dade, and 1,436 in Orange County.

6. McCarthy, B., R. Surrette, and B. Applegate, Orange County Corrections Jail Evaluation Project: Outcome Analysis, Orlando, Florida: University of Florida, Department of Criminal Justice and Legal Studies, April 1997.

7. Although inmates were not randomly assigned to the three groups, they did not differ significantly in race, classification level, age, education, or number of bookings before release. Groups 2 and 3, however, included larger percentages of females than did group 1. In addition, as the length of program participation increased, both the proportion of inmates who had been convicted (as opposed to awaiting trial) and the average number of days in custody increased. As a result, differences in gender, conviction status, or days in custody, rather than programming or direct supervision, may explain differences in recidivism. The recidivism data would be more valid if further analysis of the data could control for previous criminal history and offense seriousness, either of which may relate to length of jail stay and later risk of recidivism (more serious offenders get longer sentences and are more likely to be rearrested).

About This Study

This document was written by Peter Finn, senior research associate at Abt Associates Inc. The findings and conclusions of the research reported here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

All photos courtesy of Michael Davies, Orange County, Florida, Corrections Division.

On the cover: A vocational instructor in the Phoenix facility shows an inmate in the automotive repair course how to mount a tire.

The National Institute of Justice is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

NCJ 166820 December 1997

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
National Institute of Justice

Washington, DC 20531

BULK RATE
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
DOJ/NIJ
Permit No. G–91