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# NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

## Research In Brief

Charles B. DeWitt, Director

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# Assessing Criminal Justice Needs

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) has sponsored the National Assessment Program (NAP) survey three times in the past 10 years (1983, 1986, and 1990) as a means of finding out about problems in criminal justice systems in States and local jurisdictions. In 1990, more than 2,000 criminal justice professionals responded to the survey and expressed their opinions on trends in staffing, workload, and agency operations. The survey results portray existing problems in the field as well as changes that have occurred since the 1983 survey.

Increased workloads, staff shortages, and jail and prison crowding have been cited as the primary concerns in all three surveys. In the 1990 survey, respondents were asked to list the most pressing problems facing their agencies

at that time. Staff shortages were first or second for most types of criminal justice agencies and respondents, except for judges and trial court administrators, listed funding shortages among the top three problems (see exhibit 1). Corrections officials cited crowding as their most pressing problem.

Comparisons between the 1986 and 1990 surveys indicate several reasons why these problems were cited:

- Police departments reported that they responded to an average of 54,763 calls, compared with an average of 47,385 in the 1986 survey.
- In 1990, 69 percent of all jail managers (and 81 percent of managers in large jurisdictions) reported operating facilities that were filled to more than 100

percent capacity, up from 55 percent in the 1986 survey.

- In the 4-year period between the past two surveys, 29 percent of police chiefs (38 percent of large-city chiefs) increased authorized strength for patrol officers based on drug problems. About two-thirds of all police departments (82 percent in large cities) increased staffing for narcotics investigations.
- Fifty-six percent of large-city police chiefs and 50 percent of sheriffs in large jurisdictions said organized gang activities had increased between 1986 and 1990.
- Ninety percent of prosecutors reported their increased caseloads were due to a significant increase in drug cases.

### From the Director

The most prevalent problem faced by criminal justice agencies across the Nation continues to be increased workloads as a result of illegal drugs and violent crime. This conclusion is drawn from the most recent National Assessment Program (NAP) survey conducted in 1990 by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). More than 2,000 criminal justice professionals responded to this nationwide survey and expressed their opinions about trends and problems in the criminal justice field. The survey results support earlier findings from NAP surveys conducted by NIJ in 1983 and 1986.

Comparisons between the 1986 and 1990 NAP surveys illustrate the continued escalation of workloads in criminal justice

agencies: police departments report a 16-percent increase in citizen calls; nearly 90 percent of police chiefs, sheriffs, and probation officials say increased drug arrests have contributed significantly to increased workloads since the 1986 survey; almost two-thirds of all police departments (82 percent in large cities) increased their staffing for narcotics investigations between the 1986 and 1990 surveys.

And the list goes on: 56 percent of large-city police chiefs and half of the sheriffs in large jurisdictions report increases in organized gang activities; prosecutors in large cities report significant increases in felony case filings; probation agencies report increases in caseloads per probation officer. These statistics reflect the increasing demands placed on the

criminal justice professionals across the justice system.

This NIJ *Research in Brief* summarizes the major findings from the 1990 survey and includes comparisons with previous surveys. These findings are important indicators of problems faced by criminal justice agencies across the country and document the need for innovative responses to these problems. NIJ's National Assessment Program surveys contribute to the development of research and technical assistance priorities within the Institute to better serve the criminal justice community.

Charles B. DeWitt  
Director  
National Institute of Justice

SEP 10 1992

Exhibit 1

**Most Pressing Problems Facing the Criminal Justice System Today**

	Caseload Increases	Court Delay	Drugs	Funding Shortages	Inadequate Facilities	Inadequate Program Facilities	Information Management	Inmate Programs and Education	Jail/Prison Crowding	Lack of Coordination	Organizational Problems	Staff Shortages	Staff Training
<b>Local-Level Respondents</b>													
Police			●	●			●					●	
Sheriffs			●	●					●			●	
Prosecutors	●			●			●					●	
Superior Court Judges	●	●			●							●	
Trial Court Administrators (TCA's)				●	●		●					●	
Probation/Parole Agencies	●			●			●					●	
Jail Managers				●		●			●			●	
Public Defenders	●			●			●					●	
Victim Assistance Agencies				●						●	●		
<b>State-Level Respondents</b>													
Wardens				●				●	●			●	
Commissioners of Corrections				●					●			●	
State Probation and Parole Agencies	●			●								●	●
State Attorneys General		●		●								●	
State Court Officers	●			●								●	●

- In 1990, 71 percent of prosecutors reported that prosecutors did not keep pace with increasing caseloads, up from 57 percent in 1986.
- In 1990, 67 percent of prosecutors cited case delays in the courts as a workload contributor, up from 56 percent in 1986.
- Only 30 percent of jail managers in 1990 reported a need for AIDS-related training, but 47 percent had problems managing inmates with HIV infections, up from 38 percent in 1986.
- Seventy-five percent of probation agencies in 1990 reported a need for community drug programs, compared with 64 percent in the 1986 survey; 72 percent reported needing alcohol programs, up from 53 percent 4 years earlier.

The discussion that follows provides details on these findings as well as many other key results from the 1990 survey. Where appropriate, comparisons with the 1986 survey have been provided. Exhibit 2 outlines the survey methodology.

**Increased workloads**

In the 4 years prior to 1990, increases in drug arrests had contributed more than any other factor to increased workloads. Nearly 90 percent of all responding criminal justice agencies reported increases in drug-related workloads since 1986. In addition, about 50 percent of prosecutors and 64 percent of public defenders reported workload increases because more drug cases were going to trial. Many prosecu-

tors commented that they filed less serious drug felonies as misdemeanors to keep caseloads manageable.

Probation and parole caseloads had become particularly unwieldy, with increases in drug cases fueling the problem. In 1990, the average probation supervisor had a caseload of 120 (up from 109 in 1986), and caseloads of 75 were typical for parole supervisors. Probation and parole services, even for serious offenders, were often limited to monitoring and reporting.

Similarly, more than 86 percent of jail administrators and prison wardens said increased arrests for drug sales had contributed significantly to jail and prison crowding. As a result, it was felt that corrections officials needed to concentrate their resources on security at the expense of programs. In large counties, 64 percent of jails were under court order to address conditions of confinement, and nearly three-fourths of jail managers overall reported they did not have enough space for training, counseling, and other programs.

**More violent offenders**

The impact of violent crime on all criminal justice agencies is also reflected in the survey results. Illegal drugs, and more specifically, crack cocaine, had fostered dramatic increases in violent crime that simply were not anticipated in the early 1980's. One police response to the violence had been to upgrade officers' firearms. By 1990, 70 percent of police departments had switched to semiautomatic handguns.

In the view of many, early prison-release policies had also contributed to increases in violence and crime. Early release of serious offenders was cited as a serious problem by 73 percent of the police chiefs who responded to the survey.

**Gangs**

The 1990 survey results also showed that drug dealers and other organized gangs were a growing problem for law enforcement agencies, particularly those in big cities. Thirty-one percent of police departments overall, and 54 percent in large jurisdictions, reported significant increases in organized gang activity since 1986. About 44 percent of police chiefs overall, and 59 percent in large cities, reported

needing research or technical assistance on investigating gang activities.

Prosecutors and prison wardens also experienced problems related to gangs. Only 14 percent of prosecutors overall, but 36 percent in large jurisdictions, operated specialized gang units by 1990. Among wardens, 43 percent reported classification problems with regard to inmate gang activity.

Career criminal programs represented one effort to remove serious and violent offenders from the community. In 1990, police interest in maintaining career criminal enforcement units was still strong, and some agencies had programs to target career drug criminals. Sixty percent of prosecutors overall, but 80 percent in large jurisdictions, reported operating career criminal units. In addition, nearly 69 percent of police chiefs overall, and 82 percent in big cities, were interested in technical assistance and research on career criminal programs.

### Family violence

According to the 1990 NAP survey results, 77 percent of police chiefs and nearly 60 percent of prosecutors had experienced caseload increases because of increased domestic violence arrests. For police, this figure was up slightly from 64 percent in 1986 (prosecutors were not asked about domestic violence cases in the 1986 survey). In addition, nearly 83 percent of prosecutors in 1990 noted significant increases in child-victim cases. This situation was virtually unchanged since 1986, when 90 percent of prosecutors reported workload increases because of child-victim cases.

In 1990, it appeared that the greatest increases in child-victim cases were occurring in small jurisdictions, where 91 percent of prosecutors reported this problem (compared with 77 percent in big cities). Sixty-five percent of public defenders also reported increases in child-victim cases.

### Increased interest in intermediate sanctions

Crowded jails and prisons and the cost of new construction had inspired an increasing interest in intermediate sanctions for less serious offenders. These included

## Exhibit 2

### Survey Methodology

In 1986 and again in 1990, the National Institute of Justice conducted the NAP survey. More than 3,500 questionnaires were mailed to criminal justice policymakers and professionals. The survey sample comprised all 50 States and 375 counties nationwide. Included were all 175 counties with more than 250,000 residents and a sample of 200 counties with fewer than 250,000 residents. The questionnaires addressed five general areas of concern, with questions tailored to each group of respondents listed below. The general areas covered were background about the agencies (such as size and budget), criminal justice system problems, workload, staffing, and operations.

The response rate for local agencies was 68 percent; 2,066 completed questionnaires were returned. Of the 384 State surveys mailed, 303 were returned, for a response rate of 79 percent. Return rates by agency type are as follows:

	Number of Respondents	Return Rate
Police <sup>1</sup>	287	78%
Sheriffs	221	71
Jail Managers	280	75
Prosecutors	259	69
Public Defenders	194	66
Superior Court Judges	186	50
Trial Court Administrators	144	61
Probation and Parole Agencies <sup>2</sup>	377	72
Victim Assistance Agencies <sup>3</sup>	28	64
State Attorneys General	39	78
State Court Officers	36	71
Wardens	102	82
Commissioners of Corrections	46	90

1. The police chief of the largest city in each sampled county received a questionnaire.

2. Because of the varied structures of probation and parole services in the 50 States, these agencies were divided into four subsamples: probation-only agencies, probation and parole agencies, parole-only agencies, and State probation or parole field services agencies. Although all of these agencies usually operate out of State departments of corrections, probation officers answer to the judges of the general jurisdiction courts. This tends to make them locally oriented organizations.

3. Questionnaires were sent only to independent, nonprofit victim assistance agencies. Directors of victim assistance programs sponsored by prosecutors, police departments, or other criminal justice agencies were not surveyed.

electronic monitoring of probationers and parolees, intensive supervision probation, and boot camps that incorporated military regimens.

The 1990 NAP survey results, as well as other NIJ-sponsored research,<sup>1</sup> showed a growing interest in electronic monitoring. Among probation and parole respondents,

44 percent reported they used electronic monitoring, and about half of the agencies not using it planned to do so.

The survey results showed a significant commitment to the technique, but the number of offenders who were electronically monitored was not large. In February 1987, there were only 826 electronically

monitored offenders nationwide. By February 1988, there were 2,277, and in the same month in 1989, there were 6,490.<sup>2</sup> Clearly, the use of electronic monitoring was growing, although relatively few offenders were under this type of supervision. However, more than 70 percent of probation and parole respondents reported that electronic monitoring was successful.

According to responding jurists, the need for intensive probation was much greater in 1990 than in 1986. In 1990, 64 percent reported needing intensive probation programs, compared with 51 percent 4 years previously. To meet this need, additional staffing for probation and parole agencies was considered a priority. Often, only a minimum level of supervision could be provided with the existing high caseloads. One probation supervisor's comment echoed the opinions of many other respondents:

Probation must be redefined from the current perception of being a "lenient judicial response" to an alternative form of punishment, an intermediate sanction.

### More addiction treatment and drug education services

Officials in all criminal justice professions reported needing affordable drug treatment programs and more drug abuse prevention and education efforts. In response to open-ended questions, many survey respondents expressed concern that arrest and incarceration alone were insufficient to deter drug-dependent offenders from continuing their criminal behavior.

According to the 1990 survey, probation and parole supervisors were directly affected by the lack of affordable drug and alcohol treatment resources. More than 85 percent of parole supervisors reported needing more drug treatment programs (up from 78 percent in 1986). This need was reported by 79 percent of supervisors in agencies that provided both probation and parole services and 74 percent of supervisors in probation-only agencies. All State probation and parole agency directors said more community drug treatment programs were needed. Similarly, public defenders were strong advocates for more drug diversion programs (87 percent) and alcohol diversion programs (84 percent).

Police chiefs, corrections officials, judges, and many other types of respondents also commented on the need for more drug abuse education and prevention services. Among police departments, 87 percent reported participating in special drug education programs in public schools, and more than two-thirds of police officials and sheriffs said more such programs were needed.

### New priorities

Because the 1986 survey results identified drugs, AIDS, and computer crime as emerging priorities, new questions on these topics were included in the 1990 questionnaire. The discussion that follows highlights some of the key findings on these topics. In addition, because the 1990 respondents indicated a strong interest in community policing, results related to that topic are also included in this section.

### Drug enforcement

Law enforcement tactics to combat drugs were extensive and diverse, as the following 1990 survey data indicate:

- More than 90 percent of police and sheriffs participated in multijurisdictional task forces for narcotics enforcement.
- Eighty-five percent of police (78 percent of sheriffs) conducted street-level "buy-bust" operations.
- Sixty-nine percent of police departments had directed patrol activities for drug enforcement.
- More than 60 percent of police departments and sheriffs operated computer systems for narcotics intelligence information.
- About 40 percent of police departments and sheriffs operated asset-forfeiture units.
- Thirty-nine percent of police departments overall, and 54 percent of those in large cities, had special drug enforcement programs for public housing areas.

About 67 percent of prosecutors (88 percent in large cities) reported operating specialized drug units. One prosecutor's office projected that its Bureau of Justice Assistance-funded expedited drug-case management program would increase felony case dispositions by at least one-third. Other techniques prosecutors men-

tioned to help manage drug caseloads included the following:

- Drug units or attorneys with specialization in complex drug cases.
- Increasing staff with resources from drug forfeiture actions.
- Special areawide drug task forces.
- Filing of less serious felony offenses as misdemeanors.
- Fast-track misdemeanor plea bargaining programs for felony drug cases.

### AIDS

Jail managers in 1990 appeared to have the AIDS problem under better control. They reported a median of two cases of AIDS per jail. More than 67 percent reported testing inmates for HIV. Most of this testing was done either when medically indicated or upon request of the inmate. Only about 5 percent tested all admissions.

In 1986, 47 percent of jail managers reported a need for procedures to handle problems related to HIV infections and AIDS. In 1990, this figure dropped to 36 percent, suggesting that effective training had been provided. Forty-nine percent of jail managers in 1990 still cited a need for improved medical procedures for managing inmates with HIV infections and AIDS, but only 5 percent believed fear of AIDS contributed to staff retention problems.

The need for training in managing AIDS and HIV cases was somewhat greater among agencies that administered both probation and parole services. More than half of these respondents, and 66 percent of parole-only agencies, reported a need for training in this area.

### Computer crime

In 1986, the NAP survey identified a need for research and training in the area of computer crime. The 1990 survey asked several questions on this topic, with the following results:

- Seventy-three percent of prosecutors in large jurisdictions (38 percent overall) had computer crimes reported to their offices in 1989.
- In large jurisdictions, 47 percent of police and 40 percent of prosecutors confis-

cated computers, compared with 20 percent of police and prosecutors overall.

- Only 18 percent of police and 12 percent of sheriffs and prosecutors (but 40 percent of prosecutors in large jurisdictions) had an individual or unit that specialized in computer crimes.
- Thirty-five percent of police and 24 percent of prosecutors (but 55 percent of prosecutors in large jurisdictions) provided computer crime training to investigators.

### Community and problem-oriented policing

The 1990 NAP survey also documented a growing interest among law enforcement officials for community-oriented approaches to policing. Eighty percent of police departments reported a need for research and technical assistance on problem-oriented policing. Seventy-one percent of police cited a need for training in community relations, up from 53 percent in 1986. And, 38 percent of police agencies were interested in foot patrols, up from 26 percent in 1986.

Police were also interested in joining with citizens specifically to fight drugs. For example, 67 percent of police departments and 58 percent of sheriffs had special *Neighborhood Watch* efforts geared to preventing narcotics problems. Although the effectiveness of *Neighborhood Watch* was debated, a general theme of involving citizens prevailed. Sixty-nine percent of police reported a need to apply community- and problem-oriented techniques to drug problems.

### Continuing priorities

The 1990 NAP survey results, as in 1986, focused on long-standing criminal justice system priorities: jail and prison crowding, victim assistance issues, workloads and caseloads, staffing, funding, and training. The discussion that follows highlights key findings in these areas.

### Crowded jails and prisons

An NIJ *Research in Action* publication on the 1986 NAP survey reported that "crowding remains the major problem of the Nation's large jails, a condition that has not substantially changed in the past 5 years."<sup>3</sup> The 1990 NAP survey results

suggested the problem had worsened. The average daily jail population had increased from 159 prisoners in 1986 to 283 in 1990, a difference of 78 percent. During the same period, the sample of jails reported a median increase of 50 bed spaces. Apparently, needed bed spaces were achieved by double-celling. Thirty-four percent of jails in 1986, but 46 percent in 1990, reported double-celling. Further, 68 percent of jails in large jurisdictions reported double-celling in 1990.

In 1986, 55 percent of jail managers reported their facilities held more than 100 percent of capacity. This had increased to 68 percent in 1990. The largest contributor to the crowding problem seemed to be simply the number of arrests, more specifically, drug arrests. More than 83 percent of jail managers in 1990 reported increases in arrests for drug use and sales. Other contributors to jail crowding remained essentially unchanged. These include increased sentences for driving while intoxicated (reported by 62 percent of jail managers), longer jail sentences (61 percent), and sentenced State prisoners spending more time in jail (58 percent, up from 51 percent in 1986).

Like jail managers, prison wardens cited increases in sentences for drug use and possession (82 percent) and drug sales (86 percent) as major contributors to crowding. They also reported on the impact of sentencing policies on prison crowding, as follows:

- Eighty-eight percent reported that more offenders were receiving prison sentences. Wardens considered this the most significant contributor to crowding.
- Eighty-one percent said offenders were receiving longer sentences.
- Sixty-nine percent said offenders were serving a larger percentage of their sentences.
- Sixty-three percent cited mandatory sentencing as a significant contributor to prison crowding.

### Victim assistance

The 1990 NAP survey found that 86 percent of prosecutors' offices had victim assistance programs, up from 77 percent in 1986. The number of sheriffs sponsoring victim programs remained about the same

(38 percent), but police programs declined slightly from 34 percent in 1986 to 28 percent in 1990.

As in 1986, only independent, nonprofit victim assistance programs were surveyed in detail in 1990. These programs were not administered by any other criminal justice agency. They worked with victims of all crimes. Although the survey sample was small (28 respondents), the results confirmed some of the trends on violent crime reported by other agencies.

- Since 1986, the agencies reported an increase of 195 percent in the number of cases involving families of homicide victims.
- The number of assault, spousal assault, robbery, and burglary cases handled had almost doubled since 1986.
- One-hundred percent said improvements needed to be made in handling child-victim testimony.
- Eighty-eight percent said system improvements were needed to remove batterers from the home.

### Workloads and caseloads

The 1990 NAP survey provided a wealth of information about factors contributing to increased workloads, as well as respondents' recommendations for managing these workloads. The discussion below represents only a sample of some of their most pressing concerns related to workload.

**Police, sheriffs, and prosecutors.** Typical police department workloads in 1989 are shown in exhibit 3. Eighty-nine percent of police respondents cited increases in calls for service as a significant workload contributor. In addition, 89 percent of police and sheriffs said increased arrests for drug offenses had resulted in increased workloads.

To handle these drug-related workloads, about two-thirds of police departments overall, and 82 percent in large cities, had increased their staffing for narcotics investigations.

One indicator of prosecutor workloads was the number of felony cases handled. The survey results show the median number of felony cases filed in 1989 was 1,978, up from 1,750 in 1985. Large offices typically filed about 13,000 felony cases in 1989.

### Exhibit 3

#### Police Workloads in 1989 N=287

	Median	Large Cities (>500,000 residents)
Reported Part I Crimes	4,549	31,502
Part I Arrests	1,180	8,495
Felony Drug Arrests	235	2,400
Calls for Service	4,056	302,073
Accident Reports	2,609	12,339

Judges and trial court administrators (TCA's) also reported significant increases in their felony caseloads over the previous several years. Further, more than 60 percent of TCA's and 56 percent of judges reported that felony cases were increasingly complex. About half reported that multiple-defendant cases had increased.

More judges responded to the 1990 NAP survey than in 1986, perhaps reflecting judges' desires to convey the increased pressures they felt because of drug cases. One judge in Georgia commented that without more staff, "we will just have to let the civil cases slide and try to take care of the worst of the felonies."

**Probation and parole.** Probation and parole caseloads were up from 1986 reported levels. As noted earlier, probation-only agencies reported a median caseload of 120 per supervisor, up from 109 in the 1986 survey. Similarly, parole-only agency caseloads increased from 65 to 75 per supervisor. Clearly, the heaviest loads were found in probation and the lighter loads, if a median of 65 can be considered "light," were in parole.

In addition to drug case increases, more than 85 percent of probation and parole agency directors reported that staffing simply had not kept pace with the overall increase in offenders. One probation and parole administrator reported that "due to unmanageable caseload levels, we opted this year to place 1,600 minimum-risk individuals in an unsupervised caseload with no reporting." Other agencies reported having added specialized drug caseload officers.

**Judges and trial court administrators.** In addition to drug-case increases, more than half of judges and trial court administrators

reported the following factors as contributing to increased workloads:

- Number of judgeships had not kept up with new cases.
- Prosecutors did not screen cases as much as possible.
- Too many continuances.
- Inadequate computer information systems.

The survey also asked respondents to list successful techniques for reducing court delay. One frequently mentioned effort was same-day jury trials. A judge explained his court's misdemeanor pilot project as follows:

You ask for a jury trial today, you get one today. Most defendants really do not want a jury trial. The project has put them to the test and has slowed our misdemeanor docket down substantially.

Another reported technique to reduce court delay was an early disposition program in which a prosecutor and public defender are assigned to each case within 24 hours. One court created the "Have Gavel Will Travel" plan, saving the transport of 40 to 50 inmates a day by sending the judge out of the court for arraignments and pleas.

**Public defenders.** In 1989, the typical public defender's office was staffed with 6 attorneys and was assigned 1,500 felony cases and 1 death penalty trial. Offices in large jurisdictions had about 99 attorneys, 18,000 felony cases, and 2 or 3 death penalty trials. As noted earlier, drug cases were a major factor in increased public defender caseloads. Other factors of

particular concern to public defenders were as follows:

- Eighty-two percent reported that prosecutors overcharged on indictments.
- Eighty-two percent said increased sentencing for certain crimes was a problem.
- Seventy-nine percent reported that the number of attorneys was inadequate for the caseload.
- Seventy-three percent noted that mandatory sentencing contributed to workload increases.
- Seventy-three percent said police overcharged on arrests.

#### Staffing issues

One section of the survey asked all agencies to indicate staffing problems related to number of personnel, recruitment, retention, and training. A detailed discussion of responses is not possible for this report, but a few highlights are discussed below.

For probation and parole agencies, limited staff and caseloads composed of serious offenders created problems that exemplified the impact of violent crime on the criminal justice system. The situation was expressed this way by one agency administrator:

We lack resources to address the needs of early offenders, most of whom are diverted to clear the calendar for more serious and/or repetitive offenders. This also results in more difficult and dangerous defendants being placed on probation. This places us in more of a surveillance mode rather than a treatment mode.

Another probation administrator noted that "levels of supervision have been significantly reduced with thousands of cases receiving only minimal contact or services."

Shortages of qualified minority applicants was the most significant recruitment problem for many criminal justice agencies. It was reported as a problem for 69 percent of police departments and 60 percent of sheriffs. Among prosecutors, the need for qualified minority applicants had almost doubled in the 4 years prior to 1990. Other recruitment problems for police were related to low salaries (42 percent) and applicants not passing the written examination (35 percent).

## Funding

In 1986 and again in 1990, the NAP survey documented agencies' concerns about insufficient funds. Exhibit 4 shows the percentage of each local-level respondent group that reported having inadequate financial resources, along with the percentage receiving budget increases greater than 30 percent since the 1986 survey.

There was a strong indication that probation and parole agencies had not shared as greatly in the recent corrections budget expansions as had jails and prisons. Although most indicated some budget growth between the 1986 and 1990 surveys, more than 65 percent reported their budgets were inadequate.

One judge explained his funding situation this way:

We have no jury trials, but many of the traffic offenses (DWI, driving with license suspended, driving without insurance) and minor drug and paraphernalia charges involve serious consequences such as mandatory jail, suspension of drivers' licenses or fines in excess of \$200. As time goes by and our municipal courts improve in quality, the legislature expands its jurisdiction over more serious charges. Unfortunately, the courts are funded locally, not by the State; but the money from fines goes to the State or county. Quite a dilemma!

## Operations and procedures: problems and trends

All NAP survey respondents were asked extensive questions about their needs regarding operations and procedures. It was anticipated that their responses would be used to help guide NIJ research in the coming years. Some of the major concerns are presented below.

### Law enforcement

Police and sheriffs reported the following as among their most significant needs for improving operations and procedures:

- Seventy-three percent of sheriffs reported a need for more computer systems to support investigations.
- Fifty-six percent of police and 44 percent of sheriffs reported a need to divert

## Exhibit 4

### Funding Needs

	Percent Reporting Inadequate Funding	Percent Reporting Budget Increases >30%
Police	51%	16%
Sheriffs	61	26
Prosecutors	56	19
Jail Managers	48	39
Judges	46	19
Trial Court Administrators	52	21
Probation and Parole Agencies	73	13
Victim Assistance Agencies	75	19
Public Defenders	70	20

calls for service from the field to a telephone report unit or other alternative police response.

- Sixty-nine percent of police and sheriffs believed their management information systems used for crime analysis needed improvement.
- More than two-thirds of police and sheriffs reported that detective performance and productivity needed improvement.

### Jail managers

In 1990, jail managers reported very few changes in operational and procedural problems. The major problems remained as follows:

- Seventy-three percent had inadequate space to permit the housing separation needed for classification.
- Seventy-two percent did not have enough space for programs.
- Sixty percent reported problems with surveillance of cells.
- Fifty-nine percent reported inadequate booking and intake areas.

Classification systems experienced the greatest problems with separation of physically aggressive or violent offenders (reported by 57 percent of jail managers) and potential suicide risks (53 percent). More than half cited needs for alcohol and drug abuse programs.

### Probation and parole agencies

In general, the most pressing organizational problem for probation and parole respondents was the need for additional community resources. About two-thirds or more also reported needs in the following areas:

- Drug programs.
- Residential programs.
- Mental health services.
- Alcohol programs.
- Job readiness training.
- Housing referral services.
- Employment referral services.
- Vocational education programs.

### Judges and trial court administrators

Clearly the most pressing operational problems for judges and TCA's were related to security and facilities. Seventy-three percent of TCA's and 68 percent of judges reported problems with secure areas for witnesses and victims. Other needs cited by at least two-thirds of judges and TCA's were as follows:

- Secure areas for counsel-defendant consultations.
- More space for support staff.
- Adequate provisions for prisoner movement.
- Adequate space for prisoner holding.



## Predictions

As discussed at the beginning of this report, the 1990 NAP survey respondents were asked to list the most pressing problems in their agencies in 1990 (see exhibit 1). They were also asked to list the problems they expected to be of greatest concern during the next 3 years.

Most local-level agencies saw their current problems continuing, at least in the short run. Staffing shortages, funding shortages, and caseload increases were again cited as the most pressing problems anticipated over the next 3 years. As seen in exhibit 1, many local agencies also cited information management as one of their most pressing problems in 1990. More than half, however, believed their information management problems would subside in the next 3 years.

For the most part, State-level respondents also saw the next 3 years bringing a continuation of their current problems. Prison crowding, staff and funding shortages, and workload increases were among the key problems anticipated 3 years from 1990. Wardens predicted a worsening of crowding problems; 45 warden respondents cited prison crowding among the most pressing problems in 1990, but 54 listed crowding as an anticipated problem 3 years down the road. State commissioners of corrections, in contrast, apparently saw crowding prob-

lems remaining at current levels. For State attorneys general, court delay was included among the top three problems, but fewer respondents anticipated court delay would be a significant problem in 3 years. State probation and parole directors cited staff training among their top existing problems; but only two directors believed this would be a problem in 3 years.

## Interagency cooperation

Finally, the 1990 NAP survey results suggested progress in reducing "turf battles" among agencies that had similar objectives but had to compete for limited funds. The 1983 and 1986 surveys reported that "coordination among criminal justice agencies" was a major criminal justice system problem. In 1990, respondents listed their most pressing problems, rather than ranking a group of possible responses. When the analysis was complete, "interagency coordination" was cited as a top concern only by victim assistance respondents; of those who named this problem, more than half did not see it continuing after 1993.

Certainly, continued cooperation was essential and would be difficult, but one optimistic respondent (a judge) had this to say about it: "Work personally and closely with all agencies. Our attitude: 'let's work something out' and we always do."

## Notes

1. Mark Renzema and David T. Skelton, "Use of Electronic Monitoring in the United States: 1989 Update," *NIJ Reports*, National Institute of Justice, Washington, D.C., November/December 1990.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Randall Guynes, *Nation's Jail Managers Assess Their Problems*, National Institute of Justice, August 1988.

Barbara A. Webster and J. Thomas McEwen, Principal Associates of the Institute for Law and Justice, Alexandria, Virginia, conducted the survey and wrote this report.

Findings and conclusions of the research reported here are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

*The Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, establishes the policies and priorities, and manages and coordinates the activities of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Institute of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime.*

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