

A PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE SELF-EVALUATION PROJECT
AT M.C.I., FRAMINGHAM

Massachusetts Department of Correction

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February, 1971

Publication of this Document Approved by
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No. 5500

INTRODUCTION

During July of 1970, a self-evaluation research project was carried out at M.C.I., Framingham. The goal of this project was to determine the extent to which the institution measured up to the standards of the American Correctional Association in a number of areas. A questionnaire developed by the American Correctional Association, based on its Manual of Correctional Standards, was administered to a large number of institution personnel. One of the important aspects of this research, therefore, is that the ratings are the product of those directly involved in a particular institutional operation or program.

A major aim of the self-evaluation project was to provide some systematic information on the strengths, weaknesses, and needs of the institution. Such information will provide a basis for short and long range planning for improvements in programs, procedures, and physical facilities.

Another important aspect of this research was to encourage the respondents to evaluate the correctional standards themselves. That is, if the respondents felt that a particular standard was inappropriate, invalid, or irrelevant, they could point this out in specific terms in their response. This kind of critical appraisal of the standards will be very useful to the American Correctional Association for their next revision of the Manual. Eventually, the American Correctional Association plans to use the revised correctional standards as part of an accreditation system for correctional institutions and systems, much like the hospital accreditation process of the American Hospital Association.

METHOD

The final selection of evaluators was made by the Superintendent with the assistance of the Deputy Superintendent and the Director of Treatment. All who were involved in the project were given a particular operation or program to evaluate - e.g., the nurses were selected to fill out the questionnaire on health and medical services. In all, 121 questionnaires were completed by employees. Several individuals were asked to fill out questionnaires in more than one area.

There were 16 sets of questionnaires corresponding to 16 chapters in the Manual of Correctional Standards. The areas covered included the following:

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Title</u>
19	The Administrative Organization of the Institution
20	The Physical Plant of the Institution
21	Classification
22	Custody and Security
23	Employment of Inmates
24	Discipline
25	Counseling, Casework and Clinical Services
26	Health and Medical Services
27	Food Service
28	Inmate Property Control, Issue Items and Services
29	Chaplaincy Services
30	Education
31	Library Services
32	Recreation
33	Inmate Activities and Privileges
34	Facilities and Programs for Women

The items or questions in each questionnaire were taken directly from the relevant chapter in the Manual. The respondents received a copy of the appropriate chapter so that they could read it over before filling out the questionnaire. Thus, each item on the questionnaire could be evaluated in its proper context. Each item was scored with one of the following symbols:

- (X) The provisions or conditions are present to the extent that the item may be positively answered without qualification.
- (-) There is some minor variation or omission of the requirements as described in the Manual.
- (O) The essential factors are missing or so limited as to be ineffective.
- (NA) The item cannot be applied to the local situation. Each use of this symbol required an explanation on an attached form.
- (?) The respondent does not know whether or not the institution meets the conditions or provision of this item.

Each chapter was rated by a number of evaluators and by a final evaluator. The ratings of the evaluations on each item were summarized for the final evaluators before they made their assessment. However, the final evaluator's rating was not necessarily a recording of the consensus on each item. Rather, it was the final evaluator's judgement as shaped by the opinions of the preliminary evaluators. Where there was a discrepancy in the ratings on a particular item, the final evaluators generally consulted with the preliminary evaluators in order to help them make the most informed response.

Most of the data presented in this report will be based on the ratings of the final evaluator. However, the range of the preliminary evaluators' ratings on each chapter will be provided, along with the overall ratings of all evaluators on each chapter. For the most part the ratings will be presented in terms of the percentage of "X" responses for each chapter. In determining the percentage of "X" responses, the "NA" responses and the "?" responses were eliminated from the total number of responses. Therefore, this percentage refers to the number of "X" responses out of those that were rated "X", "-", or "O".

The distribution and collection of the questionnaires and the summary of the ratings of the preliminary evaluators was done by the staff of the Officers

Training Academy. The overall coordination of the project was handled by the Deputy Commissioner of Personnel and Training, The Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and Director of Treatment of M.C.I., Framingham, all played a crucial role in initiating and developing this self-evaluation project.

RESULTS

Table I presents the proportion of questions on each chapter that were answered affirmatively by the final evaluator without qualification - i.e., the proportion of "X" responses. As the graph indicates, 64.4% of the total number of standards were completely met. The institution was found to be particularly strong in such areas as Inmate Activities and Privileges (88.5% of the standards were completely met), Inmate Property Control, Issue Items and Services (82.8%), and Employment of Inmates (81.8%). On the other hand, in two areas less than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the A.C.A. standards were completely met. These were the chapters of Library Services (31.1%) and Food Service (43.5%).

In Table II the chapters are ranked according to the proportion of standards which were completely met. The proportion of standards met on each chapter is compared with the total institution average, (64.4%), and the number of percentage points above or below the total institutional average is presented for each chapter and displayed in the bargraph. The difference ranges from 24.1 percentage points above the average for Inmate Activities and Privileges, to 33.3 points below the average for Library Services.

Table III presents the proportion of "X" responses and the proportion of "-" responses, along with the sum of these two proportions for each chapter. (The "-" response refers to those standards which were considered to be essentially met, but with some minor variation or omission of the requirements). In this table the chapters are ranked according to the "Total" column - i.e., the sum of "X" and "-" responses. This table is of interest because it indicates the proportion of standards which could be met with only minor changes in practice or policy. For example, 100.0% of the standards under Employment could be completely met with minor changes. It is important to point out that, the chapters which were noted as the weakest in Table I could make substantial gains with only minor changes. In the areas of Food Services and Library Services, 82.6% and 82.2% respectively, of the standards could be met with small changes in practice or policy. One further generalization which can be drawn from this table is that, with minor changes no chapter would be exceedingly weak according to the standards of the American Correctional Association. In fact, the weakest chapter, in terms of the combined "X" and "-" responses, Recreation, could meet close to 3 of every 4 standards (i.e., 73.8%). As the "Total" column indicates at the bottom of the table, 85.9% of all the standards could be met completely with just small changes in practice or policy.

The results presented in Tables I, II and III have been based exclusively on the ratings of the final evaluator. In Table IV the ratings of all evaluators are taken into consideration. In addition to the ratings of the final evaluators, this table includes the number of evaluators for each chapter, the lowest and the

highest rating on every chapter, and the average rating of all the evaluators for each chapter. One important finding spotlighted in this table is the general lack of consensus among evaluators in their ratings of individual chapters. An examination of the difference between the low and the high ratings on each chapter clearly brings out this point. For example, in the chapter on Administrative Organization (#8), the difference between the lowest rating and the highest rating of the seven evaluators was 67.7 percentage points. Indeed, the average difference between the high and the low ratings for the 16 chapters was 42.1 percentage points.

Although there seems to be a relatively low degree of consensus among evaluators, there is a close agreement between the rating of the final evaluator and the average rating of all evaluators for 14 of the 16 chapters. That is, for all chapters except Library Services and Food Services, the final evaluator's rating was no more than 9.8 percentage points different from the average rating of all evaluators.

In fact, for two areas the average rating of all the evaluators was exactly the same as the final evaluator's rating (i.e., Inmate Activities and Privileges, #1 and Counselling, Case Work and Clinical Services, #14).

The two chapters which did show a rather marked difference between the final evaluator's rating and the average rating of all evaluators were Library Services, #13 and Food Services, #4. In these two cases, the difference between the final evaluator's rating and the average rating of all the evaluators was 22.6 percentage points for Library Services and 35.4 percentage points for Food Services.

It should be pointed out, however, that these differences may not be as substantial as they appear at first glance. As was noted in our discussion of Table III, these are the two chapters which the final evaluator felt could make the most significant improvements with only minor changes in practices or policy.

For each of these two chapters, the final evaluator felt that fewer standards were met without qualifications than did the other evaluators, but the final evaluator felt that a particularly large proportion of standards were met with minor variations or omissions. Thus, despite these differences, there does appear to be a close agreement between the ratings of the final evaluators and the average ratings of all evaluators.

SUMMARY

The goal of this report was to spotlight the strengths, weaknesses, and needs of M.C.I., Framingham by examining the extent to which the institution measured up to the standards of the American Correctional Association in sixteen areas. The final evaluators rated the institution as strong in such areas as Inmate Activities and Privileges; Inmate Property Control, Issue Items and Services; and Employment of Inmates. They rated the institution as particularly weak in Food Service and Library Services. It was noted that several areas could be substantially improved with only minor changes in policies or practices. The two major examples of this were the areas which were just noted as the weakest with regard to meeting the standards completely (i.e., Food Services, and Library Services). With just minor changes Food Service could rise from 43.5% to 82.6% of the standards met, and Library Services could rise from 31.1% to 82.2% of the standards met.

There was generally a close agreement in each chapter between the rating of the final evaluator and the average rating of all evaluators. Both pointed to substantially the same set of strengths and weaknesses. According to the average rating of all evaluators for each chapter, the three strongest areas of the institution were, again, Inmate Activities and Privileges;; Employment; and Inmate Property Control, Issue Items and Services. The weakest areas were also quite similar to those established by the final evaluators. The four areas that were felt to be the weakest by all the evaluators were the following: Library Services; Counselling, Case Work and Clinical Services; Education and Recreation.


















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Table 1

American Correctional Association Project

Proportion of Correctional Standards Met

No.	Chapter Title	Item Totals	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	"X" %
19	Administrative Org.	31											77.4%
20	Physical Plant	27											66.7%
21	Classification	18											77.7%
22	Custody & Security	59											61.0%
23	Employment	11											81.8%
24	Discipline	34											69.7%
25	Counselling, Case Work & Clinical Service	17											50.0%
26	Health & Medical Ser.	20											76.5%
27	Food Service	24											43.5%
28	Inmate Property Control, Issue Items & Ser.	32											82.8%
29	Chaplaincy	33											79.3%
30	Education	57											56.9%
31	Library Services	45											31.1%
32	Recreation	45											57.1%
33	Inmate Activities & Privileges	26											88.5%
34	Facilities & Programs for Women	27											73.1%
	TOTAL	506											64.4%

INTERPRETATION: The Bargraph indicates the proportion of questions on each chapter that were answered affirmatively by the Final Evaluator, without qualification.

Table II

A Comparison of the Differences Between Each Chapter's
Rating and the Total Institutional Average

Total Institutional Average = 64.4%

Chapter		Results		Difference in Percentage Points								
No.	Title	Rating	Difference	-40	-30	-20	-10	0	+10	+20	+30	+40
1.	Inmate Activities & Privileges	88.5%	+24.1									
2.	Inmate Property Control, Issue Items & Services	82.8%	+18.4									
3.	Employment	81.8%	+17.4									
4.	Chaplaincy	79.3%	+14.9									
5.	Classification	77.7%	+13.3									
6.	Administrative Organization	77.4%	+13.0									
7.	Health & Medical Services	76.5%	+12.1									
8.	Facilities & Programs for Women	73.1%	+ 8.7									
9.	Discipline	69.7%	+ 5.3									
10.	Physical Plant	66.7%	+ 2.3									
11.	Custody & Security	61.0%	+ 3.4									
12.	Recreation	57.1%	- 7.3									
13.	Education	56.9%	- 7.5									
14.	Counselling, Case Work & Clinical Services	50.0%	-14.4									
15.	Food Service	43.5%	-20.9									
16.	Library Services	31.1%	-33.3									

INTERPRETATION: This graph represents the number of percentage points above or below the total institutional average for each chapter. It is based on the Final Evaluators' rating of standards met, without qualifications.

TABLE III

A Ranking of the Chapters According to the Combined "X" and "-" Responses

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Chapter</u>	<u>("X")</u>	<u>("-")</u>	<u>Total</u>
1.	Employment	81.8%	18.2%	100.0%
2.	Discipline	69.7%	27.3%	97.0%
3.	Inmate Property Control Issue Items & Services	82.8%	13.8%	96.6%
4.	Inmate Activities & Privileges	88.5%	7.7%	96.2%
5.	Chaplaincy	79.3%	13.8%	93.1%
6.	Administrative Organization	77.4%	12.9%	90.3%
7.	Facilities & Program for Women	73.1%	15.4%	88.5%
8.	Counselling, Case Work & Clinical Service	50.0%	37.5%	87.5%
9.	Custody & Security	61.0%	25.4%	86.4%
10.	Classification	77.7%	5.6%	83.3%
11.	Food Services	43.5%	39.1%	82.6%
12.	Library Services	31.1%	51.1%	82.2%
13.	Physical Plant	66.7%	14.8%	81.5%
14.	Health & Medical Services	76.5%	0.0%	76.5%
15.	Education	56.9%	19.6%	76.5%
16.	Recreation	<u>57.1%</u>	<u>16.7%</u>	<u>73.8%</u>
	TOTAL	64.4%	21.5%	85.9%

TABLE IV

FINAL EVALUATORS

<u>RANK</u>	<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>FINAL EVALUATORS</u>	<u>RATING</u>	<u>NO. OF EVALS.</u>	<u>RANGE</u>		<u>AVERAGE RATING ALL EVALUATORS</u>
					<u>LOW</u>	<u>HIGH</u>	
1.	Inmate Activities & Privileges	Superintendent	88.5%	6	73.1%	100.0%	88.5%
2.	Employment	Deputy Superintendent	81.8%	6	63.6%	100.0%	85.7%
3.	Inmate Property Control, Issue Items, & Services	Female Correction Officer (Admissions & Releasing Officer)	82.8%	8	63.0%	93.3%	80.3%
4.	Food Service	Steward	43.5%	5	43.5%	95.7%	78.9%
5.	Health & Medical Services	Senior Physician	76.5%	8	45.0%	94.4%	78.1%
6.	Facilities & Program for Women	Superintendent	73.1%	13	63.0%	96.2%	76.4%
7.	Classification	Director of Treatment	77.7%	15	56.3%	94.1%	73.5%
8.	Administrative Organization	Superintendent	77.4%	7	32.3%	100.0%	72.5%
9.	Chaplaincy	Chaplain	79.3%	5	65.2%	80.6%	70.9%
10.	Custody & Security	Deputy Superintendent	61.0%	7	58.8%	93.0%	70.8%
11.	Discipline	Deputy Superintendent	69.7%	10	47.1%	82.4%	70.7%
12.	Physical Plant	Deputy Superintendent	66.7%	5	34.8%	100.0%	70.2%
13.	Library Services	Senior Library Assistant	31.1%	6	31.1%	73.7%	53.7%
14.	Counselling, Case Work & Clinical Services	Director of Treatment	50.0%	9	35.7%	62.5%	50.0%
15.	Education	Director of Treatment	56.9%	5	14.5%	73.3%	49.6%
16.	Recreation	Recreation Officer	57.1%	6	27.8%	75.0%	47.4%
	TOTAL		64.4%	121	44.5%	86.6%	67.1%