

Update: Correctional Beds Not in Use Due to Lack of Funds

Research conducted by the NIC Information Center
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NIC contacted corrections departments in the fifty states, the District of Columbia, and in eight local jurisdictions to obtain current data on correctional facility beds that are ready for occupancy but not yet in use due to a lack of funding. Local jurisdictions contacted were Cook County, Illinois; Dade County, Florida; Dallas and Harris Counties, Texas; Los Angeles County, California; New York City, New York; the City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and San Diego County, California.

The research identified four jurisdictions in which such a situation exists: the corrections departments of the States of Arizona, Indiana, Louisiana, and the Los Angeles County jail system. Previously operational correctional bedspace reportedly was closed due to budgetary shortfalls in three jurisdictions: the State of Rhode Island, the District of Columbia, and Los Angeles County. Data were obtained on the specific facilities involved, their location, their size, and their security levels. Information from these jurisdictions is presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. State-Level Jurisdictions

State-Level Prison Systems	No. of Beds Constructed but Not Yet Open Due to Lack of Funds	Comments
Arizona	880	At the Cheyenne Unit of the Arizona State Prison Complex in Yuma, bedspace construction was scheduled to be completed by June 30, 1996. Though the construction is behind schedule, the housing space is operable. However, operating funds will not be available until September 1. Affected are 800 level-three beds and 80 level-five (lockup) beds.
District of Columbia	(688 previously operational beds closed due to lack of funds)	The modular facility at the Lorton complex that had housed administrative custody inmates has been closed because of a lack of money in the budget.
Indiana	500 (approx.)	A 1,000-bed, Level 3/high- to medium-security unit was recently completed at the Wabash Valley Correctional Institution. However, approximately 500 beds are not yet in use due to a lack of personnel funds. (As of the August 1995 study, this funding was expected to have been approved by July 1996.)

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State-Level Prison Systems	No. of Beds Constructed but Not Yet Open Due to Lack of Funds	Comments
Louisiana	176	The 160 beds at the Dixon Correctional Institution in Jackson are still vacant due to a lack of funds. These are maximum, medium, and minimum security. Additionally, 16 beds at the Washington Correctional Institution near Bogalusa, at medium level, are held open due to lack of funds.
Rhode Island	(480 previously operational beds closed due to lack of funds)	The state has closed two facilities because of a statewide budget shortfall. In each case, both inmates and staff were transferred to other facilities, and the closed facilities remain ready for resumed operation. Facilities closed are: 1) Special needs facility, Cranston—Closed March 1993. Medium security facility, 268 beds. 2) Work release facility, Cranston—Closed December 1995. Minimum security facility, 212 beds.

Table 2. Local Jurisdictions

Local Jail Systems	No. of Beds Constructed but Not Yet Open Due to Lack of Funds	Comments
Los Angeles County, California	4,192 (5,779 additional beds closed due to lack of funds)	One facility has not yet opened because of a lack of funding, and three additional facilities have been closed for budgetary reasons: Twin Towers facility—rated capacity 4,192, maximum security. Funding to open the first of two towers is expected to be approved on August 20, 1996. This will create approximately 2,000 beds. Pitchess Honor Ranch—Closed April 1995. Rated capacity 1,240, minimum- and medium-security barracks-style facility. Mandated capacity 2,366. Biscailuz Center—Closed April 1995. Rated capacity 1,248, minimum- and medium-security open compound. Mandated capacity 1,470, including 240 beds for persons with mental illness. Mira Loma facility—Closed September 1993. Rated capacity 520 beds (male), 512 beds (female); mandated capacity 1,089 beds (male), 854 beds (female). Minimum- to medium-security barracks style facility.

This study updates similar research among the state-level corrections agencies, in projects completed in August 1995, February and May 1994, and January 1992. In August 1995, the research identified only three states with beds constructed but not funded for operation: Indiana, Louisiana, and Rhode Island. The May 1994 study identified fifteen such state systems: Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, and Washington.