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Characteristics of Cook County Jail Inmates, 2010

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Cook County Sheriff's Reentry Council Research Bulletin

MARCH 2011

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Characteristics of Inmates in the Cook County Jail

Introduction & Brief History of the Cook County Department of Corrections

The Cook County Department of Corrections (i.e., the Cook County Jail) is operated by the Cook County Sheriff's Office, led by Sheriff Thomas Dart. In county fiscal year 2010, the Cook County Department of Corrections operating budget was \$245 million, with roughly 83 percent of the budget going towards the salaries of more than 3,500 staff who work within the jail. The purpose of this research brief is to provide criminal justice practitioners and policy makers, as well as the general public, with a better understanding of the size and characteristics of the population detained and served by the Cook County Department of Corrections.

In addition to the Cook County Department of Corrections, there are also a number of other departments within the Sheriff's Office that provide alternatives to incarceration in the jail, and are adjacent to the jail, including the Department of Community Supervision and Intervention (DCSI), which operates a Day Reporting Center, an electronic monitoring program, and a pre-release center that provides substance abuse treatment to inmates detained in Division 14 of the jail. In addition, the Sheriff's Department of Women's Justice Services (DWJS) serves female detainees and those released from the jail, and the Cook County Boot Camp is a sentencing alternative to traditional prison for adult males who meet the eligibility age and conviction offense criteria. Both DWJS and the Boot Camp are adjacent to the Cook County Jail.

Situated on 96 acres, the Cook County Jail is one of the largest *single site* county jails in

the United States based on both its daily population as well as its rated capacity. Based on 2009 data collected by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics, the Cook County Jail housed a total of 9,737 inmates on June 30, 2009, second behind the 11,360 inmates detained in the largest single site facility in the country, the Harris County Jail in Houston, TX, and more than the 8,745 inmates housed in the Maricopa County Jail in Phoenix, AZ. Although the jail systems in New York and Los Angeles have many more inmates—13,130 and 19,869 on June 30, 2009, respectively—the jail systems in these two jurisdictions are in *multiple sites* through their respective jurisdictions. The Cook County Jail has been accredited by the American Correctional Association since 1988, annually passes inspections by the Illinois Department of Corrections' Jail and Detention Standards Unit, and is monitored by the John Howard Association in Chicago as well.

Although crowding at the Cook County Jail resulted in a federal consent decree in 1974, the problem of crowding at the jail site has existed since the Chicago House of Corrections opened in 1871. When the House of Corrections opened, approximately 419 inmates each day were housed at the facility, and by the 1920's, the average daily population had tripled to 1,200, more than double the intended capacity. This severe crowding led to the construction of the County Jail in 1928. The County Jail and the Chicago House of Correction were run as separate facilities until 1969, when the Cook County Department of Corrections was created within the Sheriff's Office and combined these two facilities. However, even with the new addition, and additional

housing units added to the facility during the rest of the decade, the jail still experienced crowding, culminating in the issuance of a federal consent decree in 1974. As a result, the Cook County Sheriff developed a number of programs designed to alleviate this crowding, including an electronic monitoring program that began in 1989 and a Day Reporting Center, which opened in 1993. In addition, since December 2008, the Circuit Court has operated a Pre-Trial Services Unit within the Cook County Adult Probation Department to conduct brief assessments of felony defendants at bond hearings to provide judges with more information for decisions regarding pre-trial release.

Since 1996, there have been between 9,000 and 10,000 inmates on any given day housed within the Cook County Jail, with an average daily population of just over 9,000 in 2010 (Figure 1). The rated capacity of the Cook County Jail was 10,607 as of 2009, making it the third largest county jail in the nation (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2010) in terms of *capacity*. Combining the average daily population and the rated capacity, over the past few years the jail has operated at 92% to 98% of its rated capacity.

Admissions to the Cook County Jail

In 2010, the Cook County Jail recorded a total of 78,534 admissions (Figure 2), 68,657 (87.4%) of which were male detainees and 9,877 (12.6%) were female detainees (Table 3). This total number of admissions during 2010 was 7,533 fewer than the total admissions in 2009, and more than 13,000 fewer than in 2008. Out of these total admissions in 2010, many were accounted for by individuals who

had been admitted multiple times during the year. Specifically, during 2010, there were 56,465 unique individual males and 8,712 unique individual females admitted to the jail. Thus, while the majority of individuals, 83% of males and almost 89% of females, entered the jail only once during 2010, 13% of males and 9% of females entered the jail *twice*, and 4% and 2% respectively, entered *three or more times* during 2010 (Table 3). Or, looked at another way, there were more than 9,500 individual males, and nearly 1,000 females, admitted to the jail multiple times during 2010.

In 2010, an average of 215 inmates were admitted to the Cook County Jail every day.

The number of admissions *per day* to the Cook County Jail in 2010 averaged 215, with an average of 188 men and 27 women

admitted each day, and this level of admissions did not vary much across the 365 days of the year. For example, only 45 days during the year were there fewer than 150 male admissions, and there were only 6 days where there were *more than 240* male admissions. For women, there were 49 days with fewer than 20 admissions and 16 days with over 40. Further, admissions were spread out fairly evenly over the 12 months of the year, with December accounting for a slightly lower average daily number of admissions (an average of 169 total admissions, or 148 male and 21 female admissions per day) and August having a slightly higher number of daily admissions (an average of 232 total admissions per day, or 202 male and 30 female admissions per day).

Figure 1: Average Daily Population of the Cook County Jail

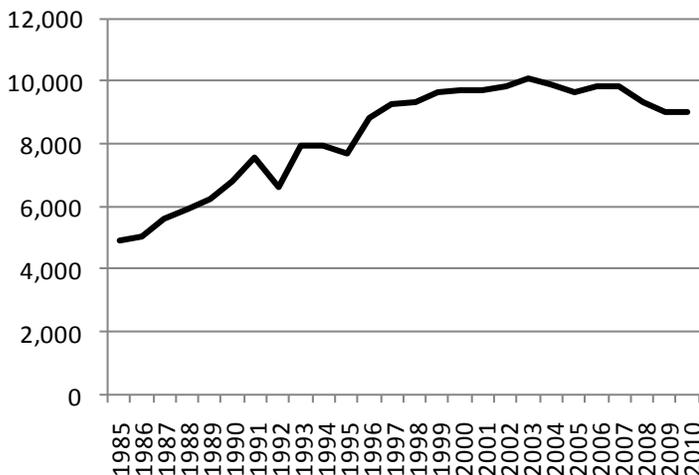
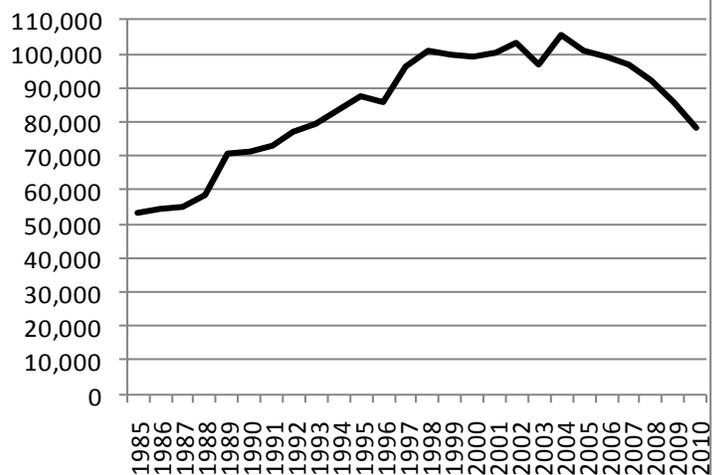


Figure 2: Annual Admissions to the Cook County Jail



The typical inmate admitted to, and discharged from, the Cook County Jail is a single, African American male from Chicago averaging 32 years-old at admission.

Among those admitted to the Cook County Jail in 2010, the majority (66%) were African-American, followed by Hispanics (19%) and whites (13%). Among those admitted to the Cook County Jail in 2010, the majority (85%) were single/not married, whereas only 15% were married. In terms of the crime associated with admissions to the jail during 2010, the single largest category of admissions to the jail were accounted for by violent crimes (30%), followed closely by drug-law violations (28%), property offenses (18%), traffic/driving under the influence of alcohol (16%), and other types of offenses (6%). Only 2% of admissions to the jail were for sex crimes, which include prostitution offenses.

When Jail admissions were examined across racial characteristics and the crime associated with the admission to the jail, there were some differences noted. Specifically, African-Americans and Hispanics were more likely than whites to be admitted to the jail for a violent offense (30.5% and 31.2% versus 26.5%, respectively), whereas whites admitted to the jail were more likely than African-American and Hispanic to be detained for a property crime (21.2% versus 17.9% and 15.3%, respectively). Nearly 30% of Hispanics

admitted to the jail were detained for traffic-related offenses, which included driving under the influence (DUI) and driving on a suspended license. On the other hand, nearly one-third (32%) of all African-Americans admitted to the jail were charged with drug-law violations, compared to 22.7% of whites and 18.9% of the Hispanics admitted to the jail.

Discharges/Exits from the Cook County Jail

A total of 77,942 discharges/exits from the Cook County Jail occurred in 2010, and as with admissions, there were many individuals who exited the jail multiple times during 2010. Specifically, the 77,942 exits were accounted for by 65,960 unique individuals. Detainees are discharged from the jail for one of four general reasons: 1) they post the necessary cash bond ordered by a judge to obtain their release prior to trial (accounting for 30.7% of discharges), 2) they stay in the jail until their criminal case results in their conviction and sentencing to prison, probation or supervision (accounting for 30.1% of discharges), 3) they stay in the jail until their criminal case results in charges being dropped or they are found not guilty (16.4% of discharges), or 4) they are sentenced to the jail as a result of their conviction, and are released once the jail sentence has been served (14.3% of discharges).

Table 1
Comparison of 2010 Discharges from the Cook County Jail, by Detainee Characteristics

	Posted Bond	Detained Until Convicted and Sentenced to Probation or Supervision	Detained Until Convicted and Sentenced to Prison	Charges Dropped or Dismissed	Total
Average Age	31.4 years	30.3 years	32.7 years	35.8 years	32.6 years
Gender					
Male	84.8%	82.7%	93.0%	87.4%	87.3%
Female	15.2%	17.3%	7.0%	12.6%	12.7%
Total	100.0%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Race					
African-American	58.5%	73.1%	74.8%	80.5%	66.7%
Hispanic	24.6%	15.0%	15.0%	10.6%	19.5%
White	16.9%	11.9%	10.2%	8.9%	13.7%
Total	100.0%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Marital Status					
Single	82.9%	89.3%	87.1%	85.8%	84.7%
Married	17.1%	10.7%	12.9%	14.2%	15.3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Offense Type					
Drug	25.9%	28.7%	29.1%	45.3%	27.9%
Property	14.6%	22.7%	22.0%	13.7%	17.8%
Violent	33.9%	31.1%	31.3%	33.0%	30.2%
Sex	1.2%	2.0%	4.0%	1.4%	2.0%
Traffic	18.0%	10.3%	9.3%	2.7%	16.1%
Other	6.4%	5.0%	4.3%	3.8%	6.0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Overall, the characteristics of those released from the jail in 2010 were similar to the characteristics of those admitted to the jail, but did vary depending on the reason behind their discharge from the jail (Table 1). As seen in Table 1, 15.2% of those discharged from the jail because they posted bond were female, compared to only 7% of those who remained in jail until they were convicted and sentenced to prison. Further, a smaller proportion of those discharged from the jail because they posted bond were African-American (58.5%) than those who remained in jail until they were convicted and sentenced to probation/supervision (73.1% were African-American) or who were detained until convicted and sentenced to prison (74.8% were African-American).

Time Served Among Jail Exits

The length of time inmates spend in the Cook County Jail varies widely, and is influenced primarily by the mechanism by which they are released from the jail, such as posting bond, being detained until their criminal case is disposed of, or if they are sentenced to the jail as a result of a conviction. Thus, when attempting to summarize the length of time served among those released from the jail, numerous methods of analysis are needed to fully understand and describe the duration of their incarceration. For example, among *all* of those released from the Cook County Jail in 2010, 18,197 (or 23.3% of all releasees) spent 2 days or less in the jail (Table 2), while 2,128 (less than 3% of all releasees) spent more than one year in the jail.

Time served is also important to examine and understand, since the average daily population of correctional facilities is driven by changes in admissions, exits and *lengths of stay*. Over the past few years, the number of admissions to, and exits from, the Cook County Jail have fallen, but the average daily

population has not decreased as much. For example, between 2007 and 2010, *admissions* to the jail fell by 19%, while the jail's *average daily population* fell by only 8%. This difference can be attributed to the fact that, on average, the length of stay at the Cook County Jail has *increased* slightly over the past few years. Overall, between 2007 and 2010, the average length of time spent in the Cook County Jail among those released increased from an average (mean) of 47.9 days in 2007 to an average of 49.8 days. Similarly, the median time spent in the jail increased from 11 to 12 days, meaning that in 2010, 50% of the discharged inmates spent 12 days or less in the jail, while 50% spent more than 12 days in jail. While an increase in the average time served of 1.9 days per detainee does not seem like a dramatic change, when this small change is multiplied by the 77,942 inmates discharged in 2010, that additional 1.9 days translates to a total of 148,089 jail days (1.9 X 77,942), or an *addition* of 405 inmates to the jail's average daily population (148,089 additional days of incarceration/365 days in a year=405).

Between 2007 & 2010, the average number of days inmates spent in the Cook County Jail increased, and translated into 405 more inmates in the average daily population.

As would be expected, the length of time spent in the Cook County Jail varies depending on the means by which detainees were discharged (Table 2). Those who are released because they posted the necessary cash bond generally stay in the jail for a much shorter period of time than do those who remain until they are convicted and sentenced to prison. However, for the most part, increases in the average number of days in jail were seen across all types of discharges from the jail, and each has different implications and possible explanations. For example, among those

**Table 2
Time Served (Days) in the Cook County Jail Among 2010 Discharges/Exits**

	Average (Mean)	Median	Percent 2 days or Less
Total	49.8 days	12 days	23.3%
Posted Bond	11 days	2 days	57.1%
Sentenced to Prison	139 days	56 days	4.5%
Sentenced to Probation/Supervision	49 days	26 days	7.5%
Time Served	60 days	10 days	10.9%
Sentence Expired	31 days	13 days	14.3%
Charges Dropped	25 days	17 days	3.4%
Not Convicted	248 days	192 days	0.6%

released from the jail because they posted bond (which accounts for about one-third of discharges from the jail each year), the average time served increased from 8.6 days in 2007 to 11.6 days in 2010. This increase could be due to it taking a longer for family members to come up with the necessary cash to post a defendant's bond, higher bond amounts, or both. Again, an average increase of 3 days when multiplied by the 23,845 released because they posted bond translates into an increase in the average daily population of 196 inmates specifically because of this longer time to post cash bond.

Similarly, among those released from the jail because they were convicted and sentenced to the Illinois Department of Corrections, the time in the jail increased from an average of 105 days in 2007 to an average of 139 days in 2010. Overall, the average time those released from the jail because they were sentenced (combining those sentenced to prison or other sanctions, such as probation) increased from 61.8 days in 2007 to 78 days in 2010. This could be due to longer court processing times because of more complex cases, more people staying in jail before they are convicted and sentenced to prison because they could not post bond, or both. Even among those inmates who are released from the jail because the charges against them were *dropped*—which accounted for 12,446 of the 77,942 exits in 2010, the average time spent in the jail increased from 22.6 days in 2007 to 25 days in 2010.

Thus, despite the fact that admissions into the jail have fallen, due to fewer arrests—particularly for drug-law violations—because inmates appear to be spending more time in the jail, the average daily population has not fallen as much. This increase in time served for those who eventually post bond could be due to the economy and difficulty for family and friends to come up with the necessary bond for pre-trial release, whereas longer time in the jail for those who remain incarcerated until sentenced could indicate more court delays, more serious cases, fewer people able to post bond, or a combination of all three forces. Again, while slight changes in the length of time in the jail may not appear to be significant, when multiplied by the tens of thousands of inmates this impacts, it results in substantially more bed-days in jail for inmates—enough to reduce the impact of fewer admissions on the overall population.

A Comparison of Male & Female Admissions to the Cook County Jail

In recognition of the different needs of females processed through the Cook County Jail, in 1999 the Cook

Table 3
Comparison of Male & Female Jail Admissions & Exits

	Males	Females	Total
Total Admissions	68,656	9,878	78,534
Percent	87.4%	12.6%	100%
Admissions per Individual During 2010			
1 Admission	83%	89%	83.8%
2 Admissions	13%	9%	12.8%
3 or More Admissions	4%	2%	3.4%
Total	100%	100%	100%
Average Daily Admissions	118	27	215
Race			
African American	66.6%	68.0%	66.8%
Caucasian	12.9%	19.9%	13.8%
Hispanic/Other	20.5%	12.1%	19.4%
Total	100%	100%	100%
Average Age	32	33	32.51
Age Distribution			
17-20 years old	14.8%	10.5%	14.3%
21-25 years old	20.1%	19.2%	20.0%
26-30 years old	17.1%	16.3%	17.0%
31-35 years old	12.6%	12.2%	12.5%
36-40 years old	10.4%	12.6%	10.7%
41-49 years old	15.7%	20.9%	16.4%
50 years old or older	9.3%	8.3%	9.2%
Total	100.0%	100%	100%
Education Level			
Not a High-School Graduate/No GED	47%	41%	46.5%
High-School Graduate or GED	53%	59%	53.5%
Total	100%	100%	100%
Marital Status			
Single	84.0%	89.9%	84.7%
Married	16.0%	10.1%	15.3%
Total	100.0%	100%	100%
Most Serious Charge			
Violent Crimes	31.1%	23.2%	30.1%
Drug-Law Violations	28.3%	26.8%	28.1%
Property Crimes	17.0%	24.1%	17.9%
Traffic Offenses	16.6%	12.2%	16.1%
Sex Offenses (Including prostitution)	1.4%	6.1%	2.0%
Other	5.6%	7.6%	5.8%
Total	100%	100%	100%

County Sheriff's Office created the Department of Women's Justice Services (DWJS), which provides enhanced services to women in the jail as well as those released from the jail but still under the custody of the Sheriff's Office. During 2010, the 9,878 females admitted to the Cook County Jail accounted for 12.6% of all admissions to the jail—a proportion of admissions that has been consistent over the past few years (Table 3). Other than differences in the sheer volume of male versus female admissions into the jail, male and female admissions to the jail were only slightly different in terms of their age, race and education level (Table 3). For example, the average age of females admitted in 2010 was 33 years old, compared to an average of 32 years old for males admitted to the jail. The youngest inmates (male and female) admitted to the jail was 17 (the minimum age of an adult in Illinois' justice system), while the oldest female admitted in 2010 was 74 years old, and the oldest male admitted was 87. Some slight differences were evident when the race of male and female detainees was compared, with roughly two-thirds of both males and female accounted for by African-Americans, but a smaller proportion of females accounted for by Hispanics (12.1%) than male detainees (20.6%), and a larger proportion of females were accounted for by whites (19.7%) than among males (12.9%). Some slight differences were also noted in terms of educational achievement, with more than 40% of females, and nearly 50% of males admitted to the jail not having completed high-school at the time of admission.

More substantive differences were noted between female and male admissions into the jail when the most serious criminal charges were compared, with males being more likely than females to be admitted for violent crimes (31.1% versus 23.3%, respectively) and traffic offenses (16.6% versus 12.2%, respectively). Roughly similar proportions of male and female jail admissions were for drug-law violations (28.1% and 26.8%, respectively). On the other hand, women were *more likely* than men to be admitted to the jail for property crimes (23.7% versus 17.0%, respectively) and sex offenses, which include prostitution, at 6.3% versus 1.4%, respectively.

These differences in the types of crimes male and female detainees were charged with is likely behind the differences seen in the means by which they were released from the jail. When the reasons for discharge from the jail, and time spent in the jail, were compared between male and female detainees, females were more likely than males to be released

as a result of posting bond (36.6% of female discharges, compared to 29.9% of male discharges), and also were able to post bond more quickly. Among females released from the jail as a result of posting bond, they did so in an average of 9 days, compared to an average of 12 days for males discharged as a result of posting bond. Females were also more likely than males to be released from the jail as a result of being convicted and sentenced to probation or supervision, although they took longer before being discharged than did males. Specifically, 33.8% of females discharged from the jail were discharged because they were convicted and sentenced to probation or supervision, and on average they spent 55 days in the jail before being discharged. By comparison, 21.2% of males were discharged because they were convicted and sentenced to probation or supervision, and on average they spent 48 days in the jail before being discharged. On the other hand, a larger proportion of male detainees at the jail were discharged as a result of being convicted and sentenced to *prison* (38.9%) than females (22.6%), although the average lengths of stay for those discharged as a result of a prison sentence were very similar between males and females (139 vs. 131 days, respectively).

Recidivism

One of the most frequently used measures to gauge the outcome of sentences imposed on convicted offenders is the "recidivism rate," although how the rate is measured varies. In some instances, recidivism is measured by determining what proportion of a correctional population gets rearrested for a new crime, other times it is gauged by the proportion of a correctional population *reconvicted* of a new felony, and in other instances, particularly with institutional corrections, it is the rate at which persons are returned to that correctional facility. Using data collected by and available to the Cook County Jail, recidivism analyses were performed using the definition of being returned to the Cook County Jail within three years of release from the jail. Further, the recidivism analyses that follow are only for those detainees released from the jail because they were convicted and sentenced, and does not include those who were released on bond, found not guilty or who had the charges against them dropped. Since tracking recidivism requires time to elapse between exit from the jail and any subsequent readmissions to the jail, those detainees released from the Cook County Jail in 2007 because they were convicted and sentenced to either prison, probation or

Table 4
3-Year Recidivism Rates of 2007 Jail Exits

	Not Returned	Returned	Total Number
Total	46.8%	53.2%	42,637
By Age			
15-25	39.7%	60.3%	13,856
26-35	50.5%	49.5%	11,941
36-50	48.3%	51.7%	14,051
Over 50	59.1%	40.9%	2,787
By Gender			
Male	46.1%	53.9%	37,082
Female	51.5%	48.5%	5,555
By Race			
White	56.6%	43.4%	5,966
African-American	40.8%	59.2%	29,363
Hispanic/Other	63.2%	36.8%	7,308
By Neighborhood			
Austin, Garfield, Lawndale	37.5%	62.5%	5,423
Other	48.2%	51.8%	37,214
By Education			
Less than High School	43.1%	56.9%	20,306
High School Diploma/GED	50.1%	49.9%	22,058
By Marital Status			
Single	44.6%	55.4%	34,698
Married	56.3%	43.7%	7,710
By Type of Crime			
Drug	41.6%	58.4%	12,498
Property	40.6%	59.4%	8,097
Violent	47.4%	52.6%	8,264
Sex	35.2%	64.8%	642

supervision, or they served their sentence at the jail and were released, was the cohort that was tracked to determine if they were readmitted to the jail within three years of their release (i.e., returned between their release in 2007 and 2010).

Of the 42,635 sentenced individuals released from the Cook County Jail in 2007, 53.2% were returned to the jail within three years (Table 4). As is the case in most recidivism analyses, the younger the detainee was when they were released, the higher their rate of return to the jail within the three year follow-up period. For example, among those who were between

the ages of 17 and 25 when released, 60.3% were back in the jail on new charges within three years, compared to just over 40% among those who were over the age of 50 at release. Similarly, males were slightly more likely than females to be returned to the jail (53.9% versus 48.5%, respectively), and African-Americans were more likely to be returned to the jail than either whites or Hispanics. Also consistent with previous recidivism research, those released from the jail who had a high-school diploma/GED, and those that were married, had lower recidivism rates than those without a high-school diploma/GED and those who were single. When the recidivism rate of those released from the jail following their conviction and sentencing was examined by the crime for which they were initially being held in the jail, the rates were not substantively different.

Finally, when the recidivism rates were examined based on the community where the inmate resided, differences were seen. Specifically, among

those released jail detainees who were from the Austin, Garfield Park and Lawndale neighborhoods, 62.5% were returned to the jail within the 3 year follow-up period, compared to 51.8% among detainees from other community areas in Chicago and the suburbs. It is because of this higher recidivism rate among detainees from these specific Chicago communities that the Cook County Sheriff's Office began implementing a number of initiatives, with the support of federal grant funds and the cooperation of the Cook County Adult Probation Department, to increase access to a variety of educational, vocational, treatment and other rehabilitative services among detainees returning to those specific Chicago communities. Through federal funds obtained through the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, as well as directly from the U.S. Department of Justice under the Second Chance Act, the Sheriff's Office has begun a pilot program that will serve a combined 400 inmates going through rehabilitative programs at the jail, ensuring that in addition to the treatment and services received while under the custody of the Sheriff, selected individuals also receive post-discharge referrals and access to needed programs and services when they return to the community.

More than one-half of those released from the Cook County Jail in 2007 as a result of a conviction and sentence were back in the jail within 3 years



The Cook County Sheriff's Reentry Council

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In order to support research, evaluation and planning efforts for the Cook County Sheriff's Office, the Sheriff's Office entered into a cooperative agreement with Loyola University Chicago to support the development of an enhanced research capacity. Under the agreement, Dr. David Olson, Professor and Chair of the Criminal Justice Department at Loyola and Graduate Research Assistant Jana Krepel, have worked to develop datasets and protocols to support research and evaluation efforts, performed research and analyses to support program and policy development and evaluations, and establish stronger ties between the academic community interested in conducting applied research and the Cook County Sheriff's Office. Daniel Brown, Assistant Executive Director of the Cook County Department of Corrections, and Andrew Krok, also with the Sheriff's Office, have provided extensive support in obtaining data needed to perform these activities and analyses.

Conclusions

The preceding information was intended to provide practitioners, policy makers, and taxpayers in Cook County with a detailed description of the volume and characteristics of those admitted to and discharged from the Cook County Jail during 2010. The information presented in this *Research Bulletin* illustrates a number of the challenges that face the Cook County Jail. First, the jail must effectively, efficiently, and safely admit and house an extremely large volume of inmates. On average, 215 inmates are admitted each day, with a similar number of detainees released from the jail every day, and an average daily population of more than 9,000 inmates. In addition to the sheer volume, those admitted to the jail are charged with crimes that range from drug possession offenses to first degree murder, and may be incarcerated within the jail for hours, a few days, or more than a year, depending on what they are charged with, their bond amount, and how their criminal case is resolved. Among those who are able to post bond, most are released within a couple of days, whereas those who cannot post bond and remain in jail until convicted and sentenced to prison stay in the jail for months or years. As a result, the ability to effectively assess detainees for their risks and rehabilitative needs is challenging, and planning for the discharge of inmates can be difficult.

It is also important to note that many of those detained in the jail prior to the disposition of their case end up being convicted and sentenced to something other than prison or jail, most often probation or supervision (or the charges against them are dropped or dismissed). Thus, the majority of those admitted to the Cook County Jail are ultimately released back to the communities they came from, and usually within days or months. Also illustrative of the challenges facing the Cook County Jail, and indeed the entire criminal justice system in Cook County, is the fact that most of those released from the jail following their conviction and sentencing—either to prison, probation, supervision, or jail—end up coming back to the jail within a few years. Indeed, even in just one year—2010—more than 10,500 individuals were admitted to the jail multiple times.

In an effort to break this cycle of recidivism, and increase coordination between the Cook County Jail, the Cook County Adult Probation Department, the City of Chicago and community-based treatment and service providers, the Cook County Sheriff's Office has successfully applied for and obtained federal grant funds to support the enhancement of existing programs and services, as well as increase the capacity, coordination, and access to post-incarceration aftercare treatment services, educational programs and employment opportunities.