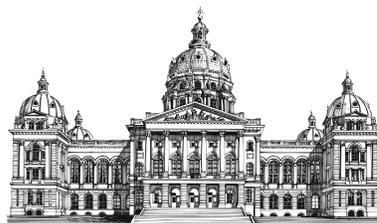


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Iowa's Prison System Compared To Surrounding States

ISSUE

A comparison of the prison systems in Iowa, the surrounding states, and the nation for costs, staffing resources, and treatment.

AFFECTED AGENCIES

Department of Corrections

CODE AUTHORITY

Chapter 903, Code of Iowa

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to compare Iowa's prison system to systems in the surrounding states. and offer comments.

CURRENT SITUATION

Crime Rates. Iowa has the second lowest overall crime rate compared to 7 surrounding states and has an overall crime rate that is 70.1% of the national rate. South Dakota has the lowest crime rate (Attachment 1). Compared to the national rates, Iowa ranks as follows: property crime is 40.0% of the national rate, violent crime is 40.0%, and murder is 20.4%. Illinois and Missouri are at the opposite extreme for the Midwest, showing murder and violent crime rates higher than the national rates and property crime rates slightly lower.

Sentencing. Iowa imposes much longer sentences than the surrounding states (Attachment 2). The average prison sentence in Iowa is 121.0 months. The regional average is 67.7 months, more than half of Iowa's average. The national average is 84.8 months, 70.1% as long as Iowa's average sentence. While Iowa imposes relatively long sentences, Iowa prisoners remain in prison 0.7 months less than the regional average and 3.8 months less than the national average. This may suggest that varying sentencing practices do not necessarily affect the length of time inmates spend in prison.

Incarceration Rates. Nationwide, more than 776,000 persons are in prison (Attachment 2). This is an incarceration rate of 326, or 0.3% of the population. Iowa has a prison population in excess of 4,500 and an incarceration rate that is half the national rate (162 or 0.2% of the

Iowa population). In 1991, Iowa committed just under 3,000 persons to prison. Twenty percent of these admissions were parole violators. This corresponds to the regional average for reincarceration of parole violators and is slightly higher than the national percentage. Kansas, Minnesota, and Missouri have a higher percentage of parole violator admissions. Perhaps Iowa's programs are more effective, and the inmates released in Iowa are more successful on parole than are the inmates in those states. Or it might mean that those states have better supervision and are more successful at catching violators.

Budget. In terms of budget, Iowa ranks in the middle of the surrounding states. Four states spend more, and 3 spend less (Attachment 3). On a per capita basis, each Iowa spends \$44 annually to support the prison system. This is approximately equal to the average per capita spending by surrounding states, but it is only 70.7% of the national per capita spending on prisons.

Iowa spends \$54.03 per inmate per day, \$5.52 more than the national average and more than the amount spent by 5 of the 7 surrounding states (Attachment 3). Iowa spends \$1.48 per inmate per day for food, the second lowest for the surrounding states. For health care, Iowa spends the least of the surrounding states at \$2.95 per inmate per day. These costs are about half the national average.

Staffing. Iowa has the third fewest correctional institution employees (Attachment 4). But looking at number of inmates per employee as a workload indicator, it has the third heaviest work load at 2.4 inmates per employee. Missouri and Illinois have heavier workloads with 2.6 inmates per employee. Iowa's workload equals the national average and is 13.1% above the regional average of 2.21 inmates per employee.

Correctional officers represent 57.2% of Iowa's prison employees (Attachment 4). The national average is 49.2%, and the regional average is 43.7%. Iowa has a workload of 4.4 inmates per correctional officer. The national ratio is 5.3 inmates per correctional officer. Of the surrounding states, only Minnesota and Wisconsin have fewer inmates per correctional officer.

Treatment staff include psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, caseworkers, recreation therapists, and counselors. Nebraska and Wisconsin treatment staff have fewer inmates per staff than Iowa (Attachment 4). Iowa has 38.05 inmates per treatment staff person. This is below the regional average of 43.50 inmates per treatment staff and far below the 81.86 national average. These numbers indicate that Iowa and the surrounding states are putting almost twice the personnel resources into treatment for each inmate compared to the rest of the nation.

Iowa has the highest number of inmates per administrative and support staff (i.e., other employees) in the region (6.63 inmates per staff). Nationally and regionally about half of all employees are administrative and support staff. Iowa has 36.4% administrative and support staff. Iowa is placing greater emphasis on security and treatment and less on administration than other states.

Treatment. Of the surrounding states, Iowa ranks third in inmate participation in mental health programs (3.1%) and has a participation rate one-third higher than the regional average of 2.3%. Kansas and Wisconsin have a larger percentage participating. The region lags behind the 5.1% national participation rate.

Sexual offenses rank only behind drug offenses as the reason for the growing prison population in Iowa. Of the surrounding states, Iowa has the second highest rate for treatment of sex offenders; 4.5% of the inmates are in sex offender treatment programs. Regionally, 3.1% of the inmates are in this type of treatment program, and nationally only 1.2% of the inmates are receiving this type of treatment.

BUDGET IMPACT

The Iowa prison system manages its food and health care costs more effectively than most surrounding states and the rest of the nation. If Iowa's costs for food and health care were equal to the regional average, Iowa would pay annually an additional \$587.65 per inmate for food and \$1,153.40 for health care. With more than 4,500 inmates, Iowa spends \$7.9 million annually less than the regional average.

Iowa also puts more of its personnel services resources into security and treatment services, rather than administrative and other support activities. If Iowa were to staff administration and support at the regional average (50.7% of all staff), it would require an additional 515 employees. By not having these administrative and support staff, Iowa saves approximately \$20.1 million annually in salaries and benefits.

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Crime Rates for Calendar 1991

	Crime Index Total	Violent Crime Index	Property Crime Index	Murder Rate
Illinois	6,132.1	1,039.2	5,092.9	11.3
Iowa	4,134.0	303.3	3,830.7	2.0
Kansas	5,534.3	499.6	5,034.7	6.1
Minnesota	4,496.3	316.0	4,180.2	3.0
Missouri	5,415.7	763.0	4,652.6	10.5
Nebraska	4,354.1	334.6	4,019.5	3.3
South Dakota	3,079.2	182.2	2,897.0	1.7
Wisconsin	4,465.9	277.0	4,188.9	4.8
National	5,897.8	758.1	5,139.7	9.8

Comment: Rates per 100,000 population.

Source: Uniform Crime Reports, 1991

Sentencing and Incarceration

	Average Sentence (Months)	Average Stay (Months)	Proportion of Sentence Served	Incarceration Rate Per 100,000 Population (1/1/92)	Inmates in Prison (1/1/92)	Admissions (1991)	Admissions Rate Per 100,000 Population	Parole Violators Reincarcerated (1991)	Parole Violators - Percent of Admissions
Illinois	63.6	23.0	36.2%	250	29,115	18,645	162	1,619	8.7%
Iowa	121.0	21.0	17.4%	162	4,527	2,988	107	617	20.6%
Kansas	NA	NA	NA	238	5,774	3,868	155	1,294	33.5%
Minnesota	31.0	17.0	54.8%	79	3,453	2,456	55	645	26.3%
Missouri	72.0	29.3	40.7%	298	15,467	8,698	169	2,309	26.5%
Nebraska	65.7	23.6	35.9%	161	2,539	1,623	102	326	20.1%
South Dakota	36.0	14.0	38.9%	197	1,391	769	109	166	21.6%
Wisconsin	84.3	23.7	28.1%	159	7,686	4,022	81	336	8.4%
Nationwide	84.8	24.8	29.2%	326	776,059	436,394	173	74,264	17.0%
Regional Average	67.7	21.7	36.0%	193	8,744	5,384	117	914	20.7%

Source : The Corrections Yearbook, 1992

Budgets and Costs of Prison Systems

	Operating Budget in FY 92	Total Budget in FY 92	Per Capita Operating Cost of the Prison System (\$/Pop)	Per Capita Total Cost of the Prison System (\$/Pop)	Reported Daily Cost Per Inmate Total	Reported Daily Cost Per Inmate for Food	Reported Daily Cost Per Inmate for Health Care
Illinois	\$ 444,019,500	\$ 514,943,000	\$ 38	\$ 45	\$ 44	\$ 4.80	\$ 6.43
Iowa	111,528,177	123,353,076	40	44	54	1.48	2.95
Kansas	155,496,959	175,204,900	62	70	57	4.50	6.49
Minnesota	95,452,000	103,128,000	22	23	77	1.10	4.54
Missouri	207,771,774	213,451,895	40	41	26	1.78	14.99
Nebraska	49,138,953	53,740,633	31	34	49	4.07	6.67
South Dakota	25,875,586	30,698,246	37	44	33	3.45	3.04
Wisconsin	263,000,000	286,300,000	53	58	51	3.51	3.78
National	15,066,011,883	15,737,068,124	60	62	49	3.13	5.04
Regional Average	169,035,369	187,602,469	40	45	49	3.09	6.11

Source: The Corrections Yearbook, 1992

Prison Staffing and Treatment

	Number of Employees	Inmates Per Employee	Inmates Per Correctional Officer	Percentage of Employees That Are Correctional Officers	Inmates Per Treatment Staff	Percentage of Employees That Are Treatment Staff	Inmates Per Other Employees (Admin.)	Percentage of Employees That Are Other Employees	Percentage of Inmates in Mental Health Programs (1/1/92)	Percentage of Inmates in Sex Offender Programs (1/1/92)
Illinois	11,191	2.60	5.30	48.8%	63.43	4.0%	5.41	47.2%	2.6%	0.5%
Iowa	1,781	2.50	4.40	57.2%	38.05	6.3%	6.63	36.4%	3.1%	4.5%
Kansas	2,620	2.20	5.10	43.2%	NA	NA	3.83	56.8%	3.9%	5.4%
Minnesota	2,229	1.50	3.60	43.6%	47.07	3.2%	2.82	53.3%	0.1%	3.9%
Missouri	5,864	2.60	6.70	39.4%	50.33	5.2%	4.69	55.4%	1.7%	1.1%
Nebraska	1,196	2.10	5.50	38.7%	12.28	16.8%	4.64	44.5%	2.0%	3.0%
South Dakota	588	2.40	6.70	35.4%	57.88	4.1%	3.90	60.5%	0.4%	3.2%
Wisconsin	4,377	1.80	4.00	43.6%	35.45	4.8%	3.30	51.6%	4.6%	3.3%
National	310,932	2.50	5.30	49.2%	81.86	3.0%	5.12	47.8%	5.1%	1.2%
Regional Average	3,731	2.21	5.16	43.7%	43.50	6.3%	4.40	50.7%	2.3%	3.1%

Source: The Corrections Yearbook, 1992