

**An Examination of Pennsylvania's Rural County Prison Systems**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This study explores issues surrounding the operation of the 44 rural county jails in Pennsylvania. County jails house two primary categories of inmates – presentenced detainees and sentenced inmates. Presentenced detainees are inmates who have not made bail or have not yet been sentenced (and may or may not yet have been convicted of an offense). Some of these presentenced detainees may be bailed at any moment, and, thus, are in custody for widely varying lengths of time. At any given time, over half of a county jail’s population may be presentenced detainees. Sentenced inmates are those who have been convicted and are serving their sentence in a county facility. Sentenced inmates in county jails nationwide typically have sentences of less than one year, but in Pennsylvania they can serve up to two years or more.

County jails in general face a unique set of challenges, including large numbers of inmates who spend only a very short time in custody, difficulty in classifying and assessing a short-term inmate population, challenges in providing treatment services to inmates who may be in custody for only a short period, and financial issues related inmate medical costs and strained county budgets. County jails are often quite small, in some cases housing just over 20 inmates, making it difficult to maintain specialized staff positions to deliver needed services to inmates.

In Pennsylvania, county jails in recent years have begun to serve as a relief valve for the increasingly strained state prison system. The state system has transferred hundreds of inmates to county jails since 2009, as many of these jails have excess capacity.

The current study examines trends in rural county jail populations and demographics, jail capacity, capital projects and development (undertaken and planned), budgets, and staffing over the period 2004 through 2011. This study also documents types of treatment programs and services being offered at the jails and compares them to what is known about effective offender

rehabilitation practices. Finally, this study also explores fiscal and other challenges facing the 44 rural county jails.

The principal source of data for this project was information that is collected by the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PADOC) as part of their annual obligatory inspections of the county jails. As part of this process, PADOC collects extensive information related to the research objectives noted above. This study also conducted an original survey of the county jails to collect information on planned capital projects and on financial challenges facing the jails.

The system-wide average annual total rural jail population (2004-2011) was 7,520 inmates per year, which is 22 percent of the total Pennsylvania county jail population in 2009 (that is, all 63 county jails combined). The rural county jail population has grown by 17 percent during the 2004-2010 time period. There is significant variation in the size of the rural county jails, with the smallest rural jail housing only 26 inmates per year on average, and the largest rural jail housing 421 inmates per year on average. Thus, the largest rural jail houses more than fifteen times the number of inmates as the smallest. The rural jail population was overwhelmingly young, white, and male.

While some jails had an excess of inmates, on average, the rural county jail system was operating at only 84 percent of capacity during the study period. By way of comparison, the PADOC operated at 113 percent of capacity. Thus, there does appear to be available capacity at the rural jails. Again, given the prevalence of presentenced detainees, jail populations can be quite dynamic from day to day, compared to the more stable (although growing) state prison population. During the period of June 2009 through December 2010, the PADOC transferred 1,507 state inmates to nine rural county jails through contractual agreements, in order to relieve the burden on the state system.

The mean cost per inmate per day in the county jail system was \$60.41, ranging from a low of \$37.54 to a high of \$127.71. By way of comparison, the mean cost per inmate per day in the state system was \$88.23.

Nineteen of the 44 rural county jails (43 percent) reported having undertaken a major capital expansion or restoration project during the study period. But, 92 percent of responding jails reported having no new capital projects planned, in spite of 44 percent of responding jails reporting a major capital project need.

All of the jails reported offering some sort of rehabilitative and related programming during the study period, although two of the most common types of programming were educational/vocational and general psychological counseling, both of which are generally mandated under law or as part of accreditation standards. Drug and alcohol programming was also universally offered, although the most common mode of such service was self-help groups, which are not found to be effective in the research literature. There was less evidence of intensive programs that address key recidivism risk factors, such as programs addressing anti-social attitudes and decision making skills. Only a minority of jails clearly offered such programs. Rural county jails also offered a wide variety of programs for which the evidence of effectiveness is unclear (such as general life skills programs), or where the research clearly indicates no impact on recidivism (such as meditation and art therapy).

In sum, Pennsylvania's rural county jails represent a potential source of bed space for the state prison system. While rehabilitative programs are in evidence, more focus could be placed on programs that have been shown to be effective in an extensive body of correctional research.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

County jails are assuming increasing importance in Pennsylvania's overall correctional system, in recent years serving as a relief valve for the rapidly growing state prison system. At the same time, data and information about county jails is incomplete and fragmented, and little formal research has been done on services provided by the jails, especially in rural areas. Thus, this project offers a timely examination of county jail operations and systems.

The Center for Rural Pennsylvania defines 48 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties as rural.<sup>1</sup> As of January 30, 2009, 44 rural counties operated their own jails,<sup>2</sup> with a total population of 6,995 inmates, representing nearly 21 percent of the 33,580 total county jail inmates in Pennsylvania (PADOC, 2009).

In Pennsylvania, as in most states, county jails operate under policies and procedures promulgated by the local county government. There is, however, an overlay of state law and

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<sup>1</sup> The Center for Rural Pennsylvania defines a county as rural when the number of persons per square mile within the county is less than 284. Counties and school districts that have 284 persons or more per square mile are considered urban. Accordingly, there are 48 rural and 19 urban counties in Pennsylvania.

<sup>2</sup> According to the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, the four rural counties that do not operate their own jails are Cameron, Forest, Fulton and Sullivan.

regulations governing county jails' reporting requirements, under 37 Pa. Code Ch 95.<sup>3</sup> The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PADOC) also conducts inspections of county jails and provides training to county jail staff.<sup>4</sup> The point remains, though, that Pennsylvania county jails represent 63 separate correctional systems, presenting a challenge to comprehensive research and jail development efforts.

County jails face a unique set of challenges (Allen et al., 2007). Unlike state prisons, which typically house only sentenced inmates, county jails are responsible for a complex mix of sentenced offenders, presentenced detainees, and others. Detainees can make up half of a jail's population at any given time (Allen et al., 2007). Due to the large proportion of detainees, the population of county jails is often less predictable and more transient than is the case with state prisons, posing challenges for proper inmate classification. Moreover, the typical sentenced county jail inmate serves a relatively short time (less than a year), making it difficult to deliver meaningful treatment, educational, and other services (Allen et al., 2007). Further, it is often difficult to know what sort of services to provide to the presentenced detainees, given that some of them may be released on bail at any moment, and it is difficult to mandate programming for those who have not been convicted yet since their status as "offenders" is not yet established.

County jails are also often quite small. This study found, as presented below, that the January 31, 2011, average in-house rural county jail population in Pennsylvania was 172 inmates. This is roughly the norm of county jails nationwide, and which is a fraction of the size of a typical state prison (Allen et al., 2007). For example, a typical state prison in Pennsylvania houses between 1,000 and 2,000 inmates, with some prisons housing over 3,000. Indeed, many

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<sup>3</sup> For more information about reporting requirements, see <http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/037/chapter95/chap95toc.html#95.242>

<sup>4</sup> For more information about the county jail inspection process, see [http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/hidden\\_county\\_jails/11433](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/hidden_county_jails/11433)

individual cell blocks in Pennsylvania state prisons house more inmates than the average rural county jail. Thus, it is difficult for many county jails to support specialized staff positions and treatment services.

One also finds wide variation in the populations and capacities of county jails. Urban jails, such as in Allegheny and Philadelphia counties, often find themselves in the same position as large state prison systems – too many inmates and too few beds. Rural jails, however, may find themselves with excess bed capacity (Bennett & Lattin, 2009), which provides an opportunity to “sell” available bed space to other local jails, the state department of corrections, or other corrections institutions. Indeed, in Pennsylvania, the PADOC has been able to use the excess capacity in rural county jails as a relief valve for the rapid growth in the state prison population, while also providing revenue to the counties that house state inmates (PADOC, 2008, 2010).

At the same time, Act 81 of 2008 established new guidance on which sentenced offenders are committed to state prison versus county jails. Previously, the typical pattern was that offenders sentenced to two years or less would be committed to a county jail, those sentenced to five years or more would go to a state prison, and those with sentences between two and five years could go to either—a decision typically left to the discretion of the sentencing judge. However, Act 81 requires that, as of November 2011, offenders with sentences of two to five years be committed to state prison (with some exceptions). It is possible that Act 81 will result in more sentenced offenders being committed to an already-stressed state system (Pew Center on the States, 2010). While it is unclear how many of these inmates might then potentially be housed back in county jails under the recent state-county transfer mechanism discussed later, the policy change reinforces the need for research on county jail population, capacity, and services.

County jails, then, are complex and under-researched components of the overall correctional system that are often challenging to study due to local control and fragmented data systems (Allen et al., 2007). Pennsylvania is witnessing an increasing use of excess county jail capacity to relieve pressure on the growing state prison population, thus making it important to examine county jail population trends, operations, cost structure, and services.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

This project examined Pennsylvania's rural county prison system, including population trends and infrastructure, using data from an eight-year study period, primarily defined as January 2004 through January 2011 (as data permitted). The original study period was January 2001 through December 2010, however, as discussed later, this period was adjusted based on the availability of data to answer each research question. There were two primary research goals.

The first primary research goal was to measure population trends for Pennsylvania's 44 rural county jails over the study period. Within the first primary research goal were four specific research objectives: (1a) determine the annual population for each rural county jail for each year during the study period; (1b) examine how rural county jail population compares to jail capacity, and how this has changed during the study period; (1c) determine the demographic breakdown of the rural county jail population (gender, race, age), including how it has changed over the study period; and (1d) examine the extent to which rural county jails have been housing offenders from other jurisdictions (state, federal, other counties, etc.) during the study period.

The second primary research goal was to examine jail infrastructure (physical plant, finances, staffing, programs, etc.) over the study period. Within the second primary research goal were seven specific research objectives: (2a) determine the capital projects undertaken at each

rural county jail during the study period; (2b) identify the currently planned capital projects at each rural county jail; (2c) examine each rural county jail's perceived major capital project needs; (2d) determine the current operating budget for each rural county jail, including how this has changed during the study period and how per inmate costs compare to the state prison system; (2e) examine each rural county jail's perceived major financial challenges over the next five years; (2f) determine the current staffing level (including staffing ratios) for each rural county jail, using the following staff categories: Corrections Officers, Treatment Staff, Jail Administration/Management, Support Staff, Other<sup>5</sup>; and (2g) identify treatment/rehabilitative services/programs (drug treatment, GED, etc.) offered at each rural county jail.

Finally, public policy considerations are examined in light of the findings and conclusions derived from this study.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study utilized existing administrative data sources and also collected original data by means of surveys in order to compile the most comprehensive dataset to date on the aforementioned research objectives related to Pennsylvania's rural county jails. As previously stated, most states' county jails are county controlled agencies with data systems that tend to be fragmented and incomplete.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, there is no comprehensive, national or even state-level source of data on county jail populations. Several existing administrative data sources within Pennsylvania (e.g., Justice Network (JNET), PADOX Legacy Data) were either accessible only

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<sup>5</sup> The staffing categories were based on those derived by Young et al. (2009).

<sup>6</sup> County jails are run by the state DOC in the following six states: Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Rhode Island, Vermont. In all other states, county jails are locally controlled.

to law enforcement (JNET)<sup>7</sup> or too fragmented to be useful (PADOC Legacy Data)<sup>8</sup>. With these limitations in mind, the project exploited data from three sources: PADOC’s Office of County Inspection Services (OCIS), the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), and an original, follow-up survey of the rural county jails. *Table 1* identifies specific data sources for each research question (a more detailed explanation of each source follows).

Table 1: Data Sources for Each Research Question

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Data Source</b>
1A: Jail population	PADOC OCIS Data, BJS Data
1B: Jail population vs. capacity	PADOC OCIS Data, BJS Data
1C: Population demographics	PADOC OCIS Data, BJS Data
1D: Inter-jurisdiction transfers	PADOC OCIS Data, BJS Data
2A: Jail capital projects undertaken	PADOC OCIS Data, BJS Data
2B: Jail capital projects planned	Follow-up County Survey Data
2C: Perceived capital project needs	Follow-up County Survey Data
2D: Current operating budget	PADOC OCIS Data
2E: Perceived financial challenges	Follow-up County Survey Data
2F: Current staffing level	PADOC OCIS Data
3A: Treatment programs offered	PADOC OCIS data

<sup>7</sup> For more information on JNET reporting see <http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=14682&mode=2&PageID=599922>

<sup>8</sup> PADOC Legacy Data refers to data the county jails are supposed to report on a daily and monthly basis to the PADOC pursuant to 37 Pa. Code Ch 95. This data, however, has been inconsistently reported by the counties over the years and there is far too much missing data in this system to have been of use to this study

### *PADOC OCIS Data*

Pursuant to 37 Pa. Code Ch. 95, the PADOC operates the Office of County Inspection and Services (OCIS), which, among other tasks, conducts an annual survey and physical inspection of county jails. Information collected in this process pertains to summary population data, as well as basic information on staffing, budgets, and related matters.<sup>9</sup> PADOC OCIS offered three relevant data sources: the General Information Form (GIF); the Supplemental Information Form (SIF); and in-house electronic data files.

The GIF is a paper survey mailed to each jail annually, with a relatively high response rate from rural county jails (95-100 percent for 2006-2011). Unfortunately, PADOC's retention of GIFs was limited to 2006 through 2011. Additionally, the GIF contains some questions related to a "snapshot date" in the year coincident with when the form is received (e.g., population on January 31, 2011), while other items ask for data from the previous year (e.g., total annual admissions 2010). Thus, a missing GIF would impact data collection for both the given year and the previous year.

PADOC OCIS also provided the two relevant SIF sections, related to staffing and services/programs. The SIF is a longer inspection form that an OCIS inspector completes during the inspection process. While the PADOC maintained SIF records for 2004-2010, the SIF is only conducted (and, thus, available) for a county if the county was not 100 percent compliant with OCIS regulations in the previous year. Thus, if a county was compliant in one year, the SIF for the following year would be unavailable. In no year were there more than 19 counties' (43 percent) SIF data missing.

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<sup>9</sup> See following link for more information on the OCIS and for sample data tables:  
[http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/hide\\_county\\_jails/11433](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/hide_county_jails/11433)



Finally, the PADOc provided their in-house 2004-2011 electronic data files, which augment data available in the GIF. These electronic files were used to run quality assurance checks and complete data gaps where possible.

### *BJS Data*

The federal Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) conducts an *Annual Survey of Jails*, and a *National Jail Census* every five years, and produces various reports from this data, such as the *Jail Inmates at Midyear* series.<sup>10</sup> These datasets are accessible through the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data.<sup>11</sup> The *Annual Survey of Jails* was available for a good portion of the relevant study period (2001-2004 and 2006-2009). One limitation of this source, however, is that it is simply a representative survey, and does not capture every jail. Thus, only 15 Pennsylvania rural county jails (34 percent) were included in each relevant year. The *National Jail Census* is more comprehensive, reaching all relevant jails, but was only available for 2005. Moreover, both of these national data collection efforts are dependent upon the willingness of each county jail to respond. Data from these sources was used to run quality assurance checks and to fill in data gaps wherever possible.

### *Primary Survey Data*

While the PADOc and BJS data populated and refined the study's database, their limitations necessitated a follow-up survey of each rural county jail to answer some of the research questions. Based on prior research experience and commonly accepted principles of survey development, mailing with follow-up phone calls, as needed, was selected as an

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<sup>10</sup> See the following link for more information on these reports:

<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=1>

<sup>11</sup> See following link for more information on the NACJD: <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/NACJD/>

appropriate data collection method. The basic Dillman Tailored Design Method approach, which is widely used in survey research, was employed (Dillman et al., 2009). Thus, after the available administrative data sources were substantially exploited, a paper survey was developed in order to capture supplementary or missing information related to capital projects approved/planned, perceived capital project needs, and perceived financial challenges. Another survey item requested respondents to include GIFs that were missing or other documents/records with similar data. This item was unique to jails, based upon which GIFs were missing for that jail.<sup>12</sup> A copy of the survey instrument is available in Appendix A.

The survey was mailed to the 44 wardens/sheriffs<sup>13</sup> of each rural county jail along with a cover letter that explained the purpose of the study and the voluntary nature of the survey. A self-addressed, post-marked reply envelope was also provided. Survey participants' names and addresses were acquired from PADOCC, and then confirmed based on information available on the jails' websites. Based upon responses reported from other surveys of local corrections administrators (see, for example, Taxman et al., 2007), a 70 percent response rate was anticipated. There was an initial response rate of 57 percent (25 jails), and two follow-up phone calls to non-respondents as a reminder to complete the survey was conducted for the remaining jails. The final response rate was 82 percent (36 jails), which was above the expected rate. There was no pattern to the non-respondents in terms of geography or jail characteristics (i.e., the non-response appeared random). From a methodological point of view, random non-response is much less problematic than systematic non-response.

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<sup>12</sup> GIFs were missing for every jail for 2002-2005. GIFs were also missing from Franklin County for 2006 and 2008; Lawrence County for 2009; Montour County for 2010; and Schuylkill County for 2009. GIFs for 2001 were not requested as the 2011 GIFs were available, thus providing the sought-after ten-year study period.

<sup>13</sup> In most states, jails are run by the sheriff's office. Pennsylvania jails, however, are typically run by wardens, who are not associated with the sheriff's office, except for McKean and Potter County jails, which are run by the dually titled Warden/Sheriff.

### *Codebook and Database*

Based on the research goals and objectives, plus knowledge of the data available from the abovementioned sources, a comprehensive codebook and database was created to manage and analyze the data. The database comprehensively included all relevant research items: inmate population and demographic trends, infrastructure and financial issues, staffing and programming statistics. The original study period was to cover a ten year span, January 2001 through December 2010. However, a combination of data limitations and the fact that some data were available for 2011, resulted in adjusting the study period based on data availability. Generally, however, the study period was limited to January 2004 through January 2011. Subsequent data analysis methods involved basic descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies, means). Missing data were either excluded from analyses or, if possible, the mean was imputed (that is, the missing value was replaced with the mean of the observed values for a given variable and a given county) in order to derive summary statistics. A copy of the codebook and database, which includes comprehensive data for each rural county jail, is available in Appendix B.

## **RESULTS**

In general, the results presented below are discussed both in terms of overall rural jail system findings—i.e., for all the 44 rural county jails combined (denoted as “system wide” or “overall”)—and then also for the average rural county jail (denoted as “per jail”). This allows for an understanding of the county jail system as a whole, while also creating a profile of a typical rural county jail. As noted in the data below, there is substantial variation between county jails – some house only a few dozen inmates, while others house hundreds. Thus, the portraits of a “typical” rural county jail presented below should be understood in the light of these variations.

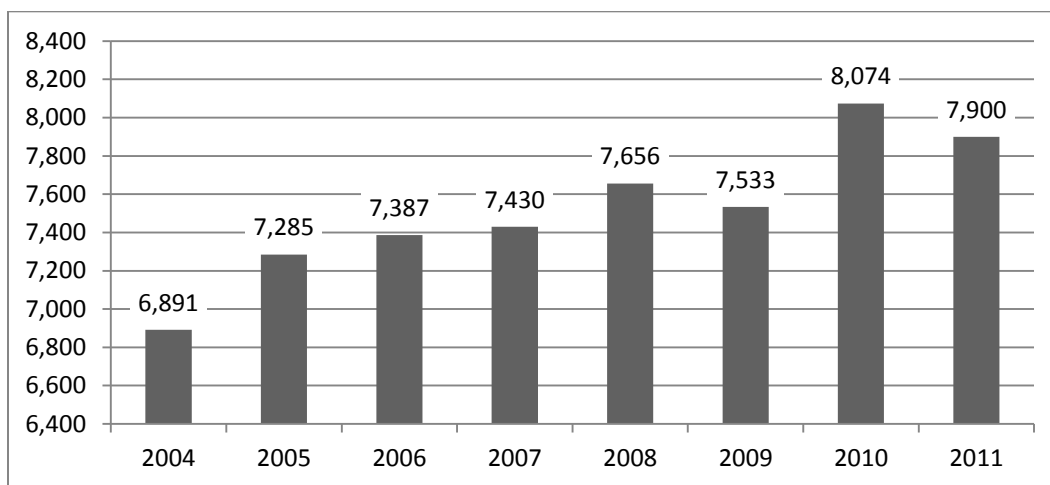
As noted earlier, Appendix B contains detailed data for each county jail for each study year for each variable in this study. For selected variables, data for each jail is also shown in tables in the main body of the report below.

**First Research Goal: Measure population trends for Pennsylvania’s 44 rural county jails over the study period.**

*Research Objective 1A: Determine the annual population for each rural county jail for each year.*

The system-wide average annual total rural jail population (2004-2011) was 7,520 inmates per year (*Figure 1*), which is 22 percent of the total Pennsylvania county jail population in 2009, that is for all 63 county jails combined (PADOC, 2009). There were a minimum of 6,891 total rural jail inmates in 2004, and a maximum of 8,074 total inmates in 2010. Thus, the rural county jail system has grown by 17 percent during that time period.

**Figure 1: Overall Annual Rural Jail Inmate Population (2004-2011)**



*Source: PADOC, BJS*

The average annual total population per jail was 171 inmates per year (2004-2010), with a minimum average of 34 inmates per year in Montour County, and a maximum average of 425

inmates per year in Cambria County. Thus, as noted above, there is significant variation in the size of rural county jails, with the largest rural jail being more than ten times the total size of the smallest.

System-wide, Pennsylvania's rural county jails averaged 7,105 total *in-house* inmates per year (2004-2011), which is less than one-tenth of one percent of Pennsylvania's average population during the period. Of this in-house population, there were an average of 3,536 presentenced detainees per year, and an average of 3,739 sentenced inmates per year (2006-2011 average). In other words, approximately one-half of the overall in-house population was comprised of presentenced detainees.

The average in-house population per jail was 162 inmates per year (2004-2011), with a minimum average of 26 per year inmates in Montour County, and a maximum average of 421 inmates per year in Cambria County. As with the overall proportions, the presentenced detainees represented approximately half of the in-house population: There were an average of 80 in-house presentenced detainees per jail each year, and an average of 85 sentenced inmates per jail each year (2006-2011).<sup>14</sup>

System-wide, Pennsylvania's rural county jails housed an average of 379 inmates *elsewhere* per year (2006-2011) (see *Table 2*, below, for the average number of inmates housed elsewhere per year, for each rural county jail). As discussed below, Pennsylvania's rural county jails received an average of 781 inmates per year (2005-2011) *from* other jurisdictions (state, federal, other county, etc.) (see *Table 15*, below, for the average number of in-house inmates other-jurisdiction inmates per year, for each rural county jail). The rural county jail system, then, receives almost double the number of inmates from other jurisdictions as it houses elsewhere.

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<sup>14</sup> Jails reported total population and in-house population counts for a "snapshot date" (the last business day in January for that year) and calculations are based on these snapshot figures.

Table 2: Average Number of Inmates Housed Elsewhere per Year, by County Jail (2006-2011)

County Jail	Average Number of Inmates Housed Elsewhere	County Jail	Average Number of Inmates Housed Elsewhere
Adams	13	Lawrence	6
Armstrong	4	<u>Lycoming</u>	45
Bedford	3	McKean	5
Blair	8	Mercer	11
Bradford	5	Mifflin	3
<u>Butler</u>	82	Monroe	5
Cambria	3	Montour	8
Carbon	7	Northumberland	2
Centre	14	Perry	13
Clarion	4	Pike	9
Clearfield	1	Potter	1
Clinton	2	Schuylkill	2
Columbia	1	Snyder	1
Crawford	1	Somerset	3
Elk	6	Susquehanna	1
Fayette	5	Tioga	< 1
Franklin	2	<u>Union</u>	29
Greene	2	Venango	4
<u>Huntingdon</u>	20	Warren	1
<u>Indiana</u>	25	Washington	< 1
Jefferson	10	Wayne	7
Juniata	5	Wyoming	1

*Underline denotes the top five counties in terms of number of inmates housed elsewhere. Source: PADOc*

Of the eleven jails that were high on housing inmates elsewhere (defined as having averages greater than the system-wide mean), ten (91 percent) of them were actually below capacity during the study period (*Table 3*). (For a discussion of why inmates are transferred between institutions, see *Research Objective 1D*, below.). This finding is partly explained by the fact that *most* jails are in fact under capacity, as shown later. As may be expected, most of the jails that were high on housing inmates elsewhere (7 jails, 64 percent) also had high average costs per day per inmate (*Table 4*). There was no discernible pattern between the age of the institution and whether it was likely to house inmates elsewhere (*Table 5*). Thus, cost per day may play an important role in how jails shift inmates to other counties.

Table 3: Number of Jails, by Housing Inmates Elsewhere (2006-2011) and Capacity (2005-2010)

		Housed Elsewhere		
		High	Low	Total
Capacity	Above	1	2	3
	Below	10	31	41
	Total	11	33	44

Source: PADO, BJS

Table 4: Number of Jails, by Housing Inmates Elsewhere (2006-2011) and Average Cost per Day per Inmate (2004-2010)

		Housed Elsewhere		
		High	Low	Total
Average Cost Per Day Per Inmate	High	7	11	18
	Low	4	22	26
	Total	11	33	44

Source: PADOc

Table 5: Number of Jails, by Age of Facility and Housing Inmates Elsewhere (2006-2011)

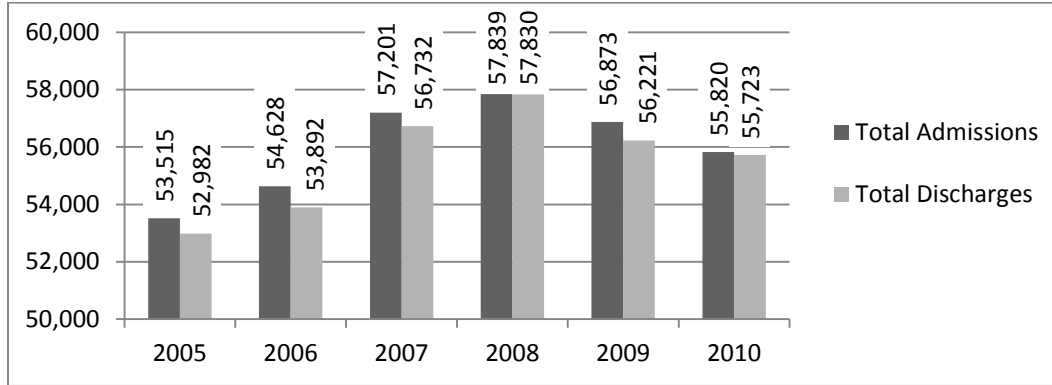
		Age of Facility						Total
		2000s – No Renovation	2000s + Renovation	1990s - No Renovation	1990s + Renovation	Before 1990 - No Renovation	Before 1990 + Renovation	
Housed Elsewhere	High	4	1	0	2	1	3	11
	Low	3	1	7	5	4	13	33
	Total	7	2	7	7	5	16	44

Source: PADOc

System-wide, the average total admissions for rural jails were 55,979 per year, and average total discharges were 55,563 per year (2005-2010) (*Figure 2*). The admission and discharge statistics are indicative of a correctional system characterized by large and rapid turnover of its inmate population. As discussed earlier, this is not unusual for county jails. By comparison, the state prison system admitted an average of 16,331 inmates and discharged an average of 16,026 inmates during 2005-2009 (PADOc, 2011a).



Figure 2: Overall Rural County Jail Admissions and Discharges (2005-2010)



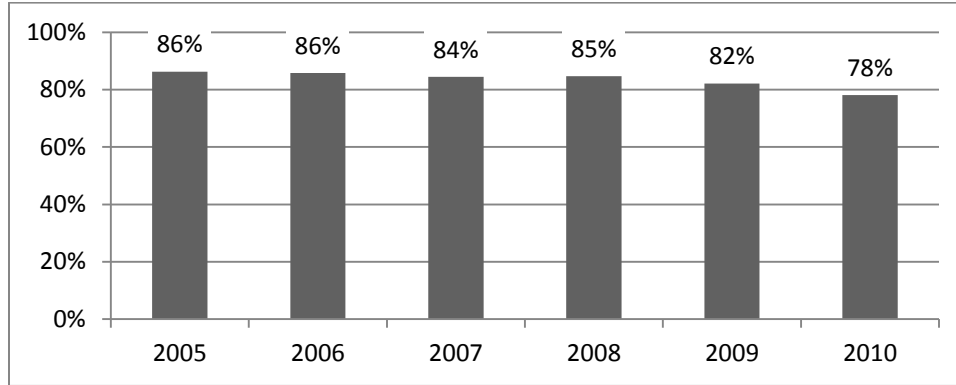
Source: PADO, BJS

There were an average of 1,272 admissions and 1,264 discharges per jail during the study period (2005-2010).

*Research Objective 1B: Examine how rural county jail population compares to jail capacity, and how this has changed.*

Capacity refers to the number of available beds. Percentage of capacity can be calculated as the proportion of available bed space comprised by the in-house inmate population. Where there are more inmates than available beds, a jail said to be over capacity. Despite an increasing overall total population, the capacity of Pennsylvania’s rural jail system has also increased (and, thus, percentage of capacity has decreased). Overall, the rural county jail system averaged 84 percent capacity per year (2005-2010), with a minimum of 78 percent capacity in 2010, and a maximum of 86 percent capacity in 2005 and 2006 (*Figure 3*). By comparison, the state system operated at 113 percent average capacity during the 2005-2009 time period (PADO, 2011a).

Figure 3: Overall Rural County Jail Percentage of Capacity (2005-2010)



Source: PADO, BJS

On average, only three jails (seven percent) were over capacity during the study period (2005-2010). Of the 41 jails that were below capacity, 25 (61 percent) of them likewise had low average costs per day per inmate (defined as having averages less than the system-wide mean) during the study period (*Table 6*). There was no discernible pattern between the age of the facility and its capacity (*Table 7*). Once again, since the vast majority of jails were under capacity (i.e. there is a very small sample of over capacity jails), it is difficult to conduct meaningful analysis of the differences between over and under capacity jails.

Table 6: Number of Jails, by Capacity (2005-2010) and Average Cost per Day per Inmate (2004-2010)

		Capacity		
		Above	Below	Total
Average Cost Per Day Per Inmate	High	2	16	18
	Low	1	25	26
	Total	3	41	44

Source: PADO, BJS

Table 7: Number of Jails, by Age of Facility and Capacity (2005-2010)

		Age of Facility						Total
		2000s – No Renovation	2000s + Renovation	1990s - No Renovation	1990s + Renovation	Before 1990 - No Renovation	Before 1990 + Renovation	
Capacity	Above	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
	Below	6	2	7	6	5	15	41
	Total	7	2	7	7	5	16	44

Source: PADO, BJS

Per jail, capacity ranged widely, from a minimum of 22 percent average annual capacity in Potter County, to a maximum of 121 percent annual average capacity in Indiana County during the study period (2005-2010) (*Table 8*). As previously mentioned, this sort of variation exemplifies the perspective that simply reporting system-wide figures masks important differences between each jail. To address the question of how jails handle excess capacity, the rated capacity of a correctional institution can be calculated in various ways (Bennett & Lattin, 2009). In general, though, common variables used in most capacity calculations include the number of physically present beds, the size of the cells, the age of the facility, available staff, and programming and other services available. Capacity then is more than just the number of beds available. Capacity represents the “ideal” number of inmates that can be managed in a given facility, although in reality additional inmates can be added by placing additional beds into larger cells or by converting common areas of the jail (e.g., gyms, auditoriums, and even conference rooms) to sleeping areas, often using bunk beds or cots. Capacity can also be a fluid construct, especially in county jails which as noted earlier can fluctuate in population from day to day. Thus, if there is a spate of arrests on a given day, a jail normally under capacity may become

temporarily over capacity. Ideally, jails want to be at or near their rated capacity (Bennett & Lattin, 2009). A jail severely over capacity runs the risk of inmate disturbances, staff injuries, and even inmate litigation due to poor living conditions. Conversely, a jail that is consistently and significantly under capacity may represent a waste of resources. Referencing *Table 8* below, two of the three over capacity rural jails (McKean and Schuylkill) are only slightly over their rated capacity, with the third (Indiana) being the highest, at 121 percent. Many of the jails under capacity were near the 90 percent range, which does allow for the temporary population spikes that are characteristic of county jails.

**Table 8: Average Percentage of Capacity per Year, by County Jail (2005-2010)**

<b>County Jail</b>	<b>Percentage of Capacity</b>	<b>County Jail</b>	<b>Percentage of Capacity</b>
Adams	69%	Lawrence	79%
Armstrong	94%	Lycoming	88%
Bedford	91%	<u>McKean</u>	109%
Blair	89%	Mercer	89%
Bradford	86%	Mifflin	71%
Butler	90%	Monroe	86%
Cambria	94%	Montour	66%
Carbon	83%	Northumberland	85%
Centre	77%	Perry	81%
Clarion	75%	Pike	97%
Clearfield	97%	Potter	22%
Clinton	94%	<u>Schuylkill</u>	103%
Columbia	82%	Snyder	79%
Crawford	78%	Somerset	60%

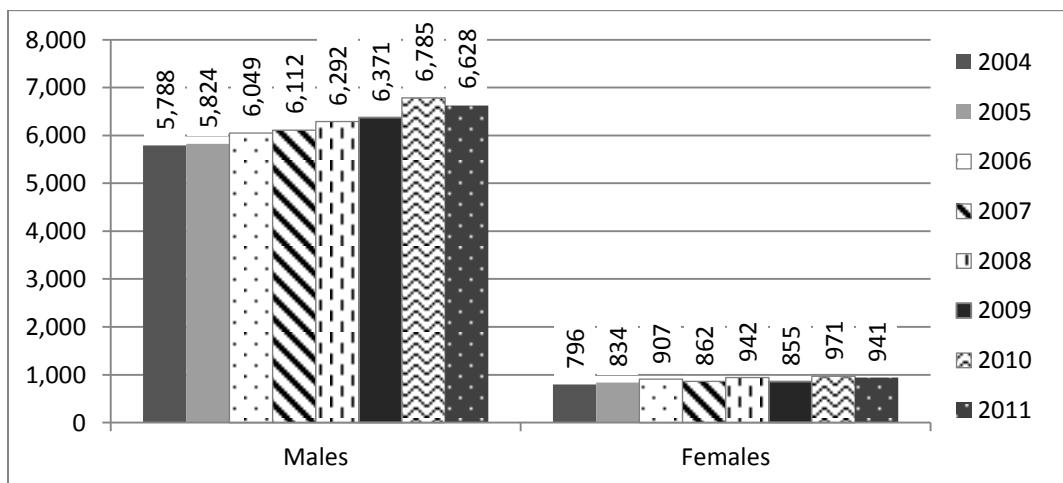
Elk	73%	Susquehanna	63%
Fayette	94%	Tioga	51%
Franklin	78%	Union	96%
Greene	67%	Venango	95%
Huntingdon	96%	Warren	87%
<u>Indiana</u>	121%	Washington	97%
Jefferson	95%	Wayne	85%
Juniata	68%	Wyoming	75%

*Underline denotes jails that were over capacity, on average. Source: PADO, BJS*

*Research Objective 1C: Determine the demographic breakdown of the rural county jail population (gender, race, age), including how it has changed.*

Males represented an average of 88 percent of total rural county jail inmates per year, and females represented the remaining average of 12 percent of overall inmates per year (2004-2011) (Figure 4). System-wide, there were an average total of 6,231 male inmates per year, and 889 female inmates per year (2004-2011).

**Figure 4: Overall Annual Rural County Jail Population, by Gender (2004-2011)**



*Source: PADO, BJS*

Per jail, there were an average of 142 males and 20 females per year during the study period (2004-2011). This gender breakdown is typical of correction systems in general, with males constituting the large share of the inmate population. This reflects deeper gender-based patterns of criminal offending and sentencing practices which are largely invariant nationally, and has been well-established in the criminal justice research for decades (Blumstein et al., 1986).

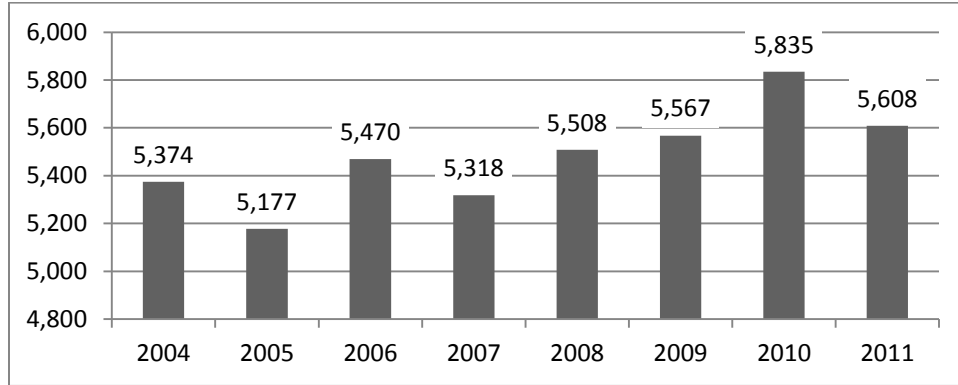
During the study period (2004-2011), on average, white inmates represented more than three-quarters of all rural county jail inmates per year, black inmates represented less than one-fifth of inmates, and Hispanic and other-race inmates combined represented five percent of all rural county jail inmates per year (*Table 9, Figure 5 and Figure 6*). It is more difficult to establish whether this racial/ethnic breakdown is typical of correctional systems in general, as the racial composition of a county correctional institution is highly dependent on the racial demographics of the local community. It is not surprising, though, to find a large white population housed in these rural county jails.

Table 9: Average Annual Rural County Jail Population, by Race (2004-2011)

<b>Race</b>	<b>Average Number and Percentage</b>
White	5,482 (77%)
Black	1,254 (18%)
Hispanic	340 (5%)
Other	74 (1%)
Total	7150 (101%*)

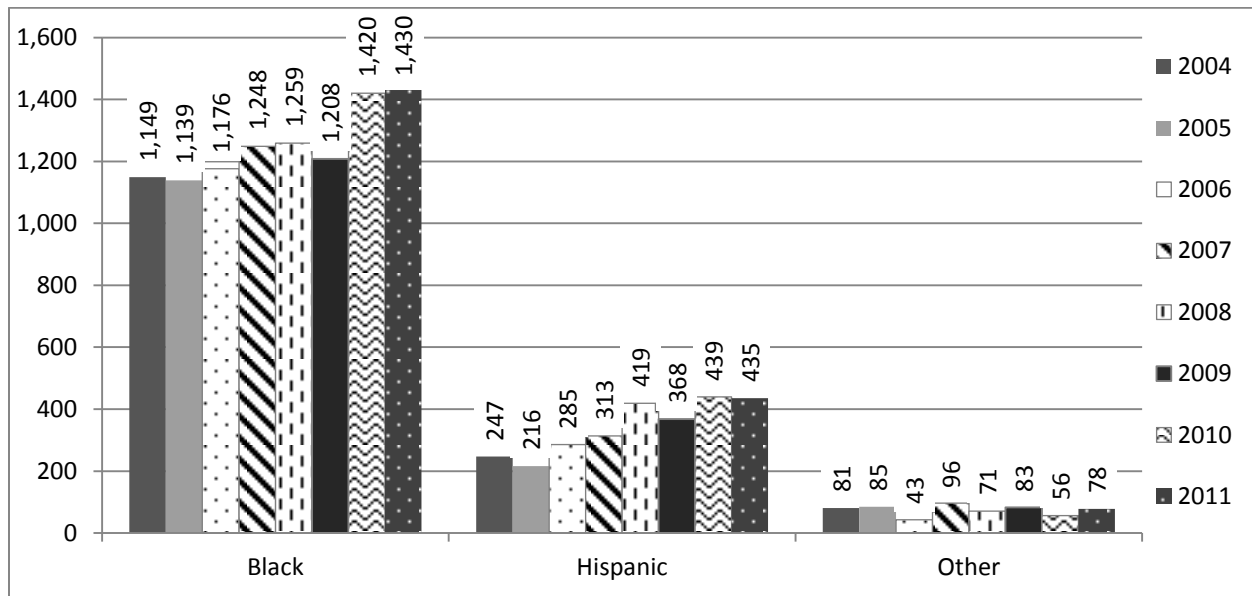
*\*Total greater than 100 percent due to rounding. Source: PADO, BJS*

Figure 5: Overall Rural County Jail White Inmate Population (2004-2010)



Source: PADO, BJS

Figure 6: Overall Rural County Jail Black, Hispanic, and Other-Race Inmate Populations (2004-2011)



Source: PADO, BJS

Inmates younger than 30 years old represented half of the average total rural county jail inmate population during the study period (2004-2011).<sup>15</sup> The system-wide annual averages, and respective percentages, for each age category are presented in *Table 10*. As noted in *Table 10*,

<sup>15</sup> Data were missing for 2005; analyses are based on data from 2004 and 2006-2011.

there are a very small number of inmates under the age of 18. The federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A) generally requires that juveniles not be held in secure facilities with adults, but that where such temporary housing may occur, that the juveniles be held so as to ensure “sight and sound” separation between adult and juvenile offenders (i.e., there can be no mixing of the two populations). Each state is required to monitor compliance with the JJDP A. In Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency maintains the Secure Detention Monitoring Project to audit and enforce compliance with this act.<sup>16</sup> In practice, juveniles may periodically end up being detained in county jails (or police lock-ups) until their identities and ages are determined, at which point other housing arrangements are made (e.g., transfer to a juvenile facility, release to parents, etc.). Thus, a small number of inmates under the age of 18 will invariably show up in county jail data sets.

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<sup>16</sup> See the following link for more information about PCCD’s compliance monitoring efforts:  
<http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=5411&&PageID=495426&level=3&css=L3&mode=2>



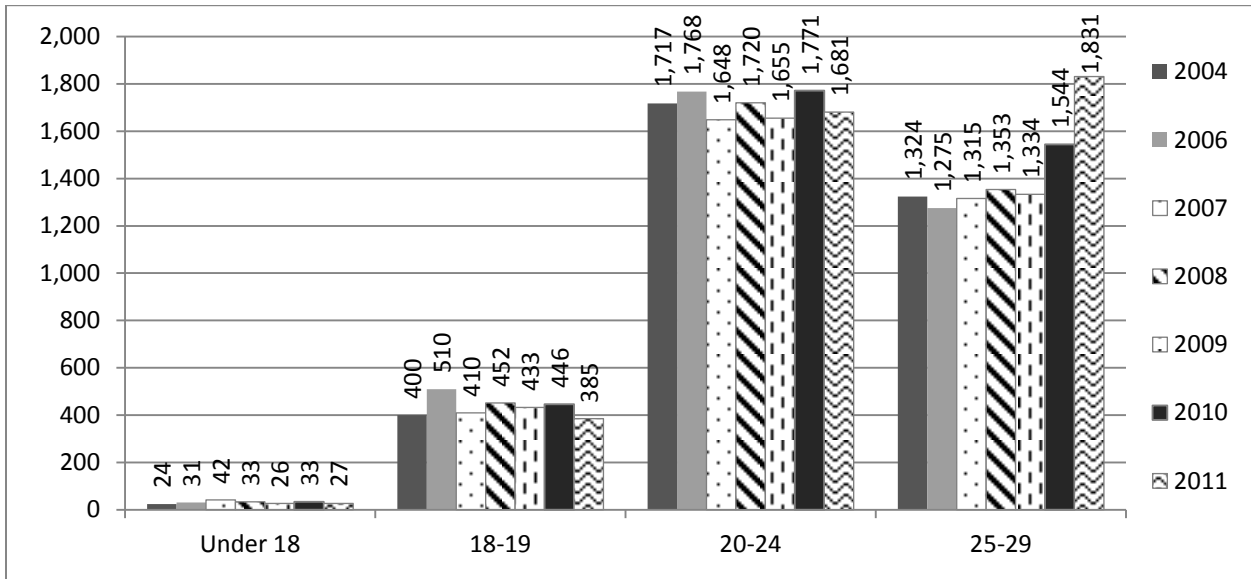
Table 10: Average Annual Rural County Jail Population, by Age Category (2004-2011)

<b>Age Category</b>	<b>Average Number and Percentage</b>
Under 18	31 (<1%)
18-19 year olds	434 (6%)
20-24 year olds	1,709 (24%)
25-29 year olds	1,425 (20%)
30-34 year olds	1,009 (14%)
35-39 year olds	817 (11%)
40-44 year olds	774 (11%)
45-54 year olds	771 (11%)
55 years old or older	226 (3%)
Total	7195 (100%)

Source: PADOA

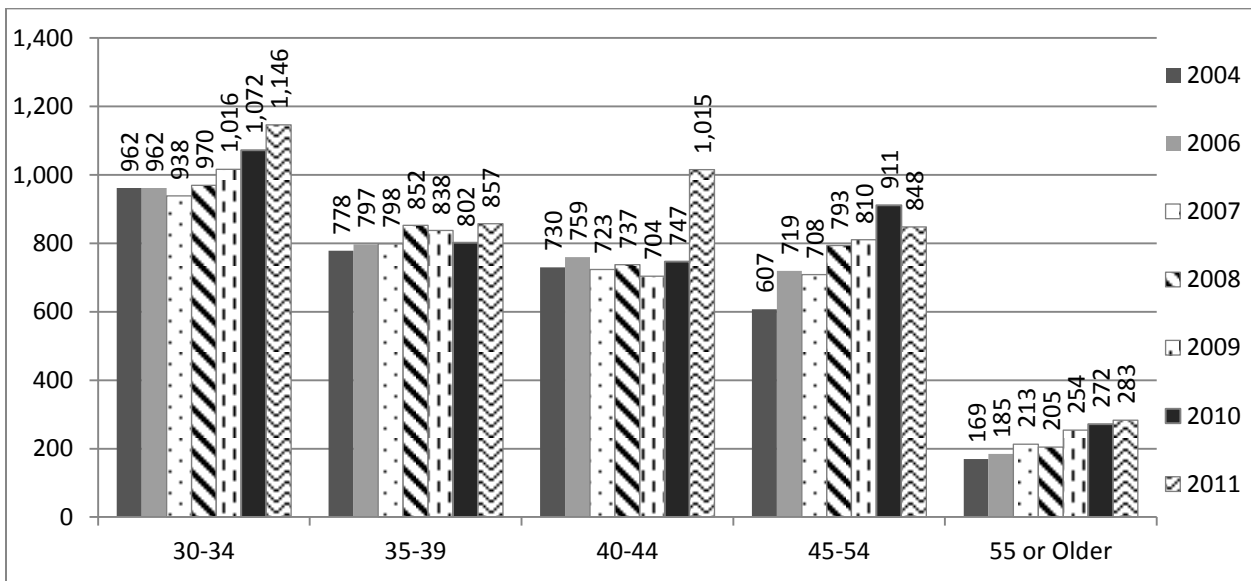
The system-wide total inmate population, by age group and year, is provided in *Figures 7 and 8*. Again, this is typical of correctional systems in general, with a large proportion of the inmate population being in their 20s and 30s. As with gender, this reflects deeper age graded patterns of criminal offending which are largely invariant nationally – younger people are more criminally active than older people, which has been well-established in the criminal justice research for decades (Blumstein et al., 1986).

Figure 7: Overall Rural County Jail Population, by Age Category (Under 18 to 25-29) (2004-2011)



Source: PADO

Figure 8: Overall Rural County Jail Population, by Age Category (30-34 to 55 or Older) (2004-2011)

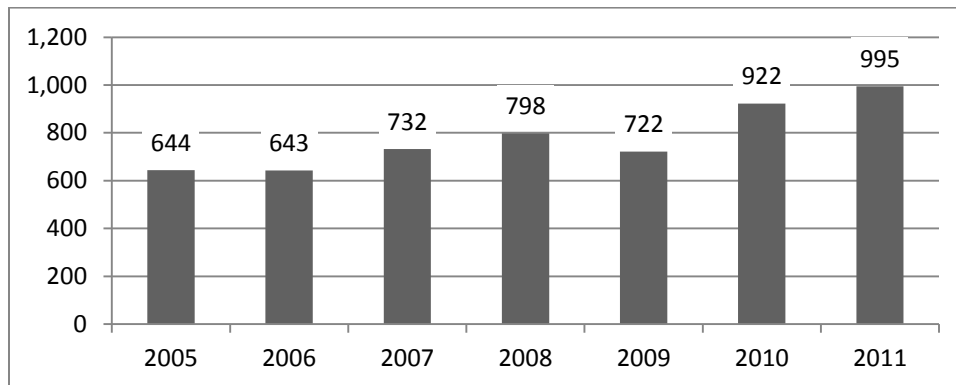


Source: PADO

*Research Objective 1D: Examine the extent to which rural county jails have been housing offenders from other jurisdictions (state, federal, other counties, etc.).*

System-wide, rural county jails housed 779 inmates per year, on average, from other jurisdictions (2005-2011), with a minimum of 643 other-jurisdiction inmates per year in 2006, and maximum of 995 other-jurisdiction inmates per year in 2011 (*Figure 9*).

Figure 9: Overall Rural County Jail In-House Inmates from Other Jurisdictions (2005-2011)



Source: PADO, BJS

Of the twelve jails that were high on housing other-jurisdiction inmates (defined as having averages greater than the system-wide mean), eleven (92 percent) of them were below capacity during the study period (*Table 11*). Somewhat paradoxically, however, half of the jails that were high on housing other-jurisdiction inmates (6 jails, 50 percent) were also high on housing their own inmates elsewhere (*Table 12*). To be sure, inmates can be housed out of jurisdiction for a number of reasons, including overcrowding in the home institution (which, according to the data collected for this study, is less of an issue), conflicts with other inmates in the home institution, need for specialized services, pursuant to court orders, or at the petition of the inmate (e.g., a sentenced inmate may actually be from another county and petitions to be housed in his home county in order to facilitate contact with family) .

Table 11: Number of Jails, by Housing of Other-Jurisdiction Inmates (2005-2011) and Capacity  
(2005-2010)

		Housing Other-Jurisdiction Inmates		
		High	Low	Total
Capacity	Above	1	2	3
	Below	11	30	41
	Total	12	32	44

Source: PADO, BJS

Table 12: Number of Jails, by Housing of Other-Jurisdiction Inmates (2005-2011) and Inmates  
Housed Elsewhere (2006-2011)

		Housing Other-Jurisdiction Inmates		
		High	Low	Total
Housed Elsewhere	High	6	5	11
	Low	6	27	33
	Total	12	32	44

Source: PADO, BJS

As may be expected, most of the jails that were high on housing other-jurisdiction inmates (7 jails, 58 percent) had low average costs per day per inmate (*Table 13*). There was no discernible pattern between the age of the facility and whether it was likely to house other-jurisdiction inmates (*Table 14*).

Table 13: Number of Jails, by Housing Other-Jurisdiction Inmates (2005-2011) and Average Cost per Day per Inmate (2004-2010)

		Housing Other-Jurisdiction Inmates		
		High	Low	Total
Average Cost Per Day Per Inmate	High	5	13	18
	Low	7	19	26
	Total	12	32	44

Source: PADO, BJS

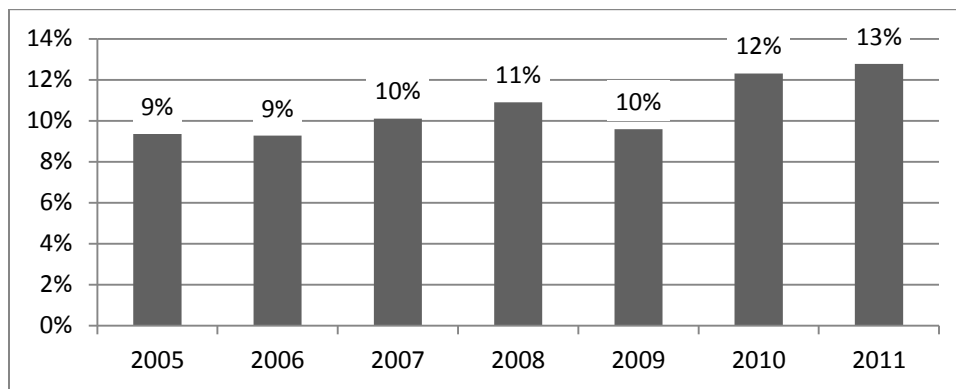
Table 14: Number of Jails, by Age of Facility and Housing Other-Jurisdiction Inmates (2005-2011)

		Age of Facility						Total
		2000s – No Renovation	2000s + Renovation	1990s - No Renovation	1990s + Renovation	Before 1990 - No Renovation	Before 1990 + Renovation	
Housing Other-Jurisdiction Inmates	High	4	0	2	4	0	2	12
	Low	3	2	5	3	5	14	32
	Total	7	2	7	7	5	16	14

Source: PADO, BJS

Other-jurisdiction inmates, on average, represented 11 percent of the system-wide average total in-house population (2005-2011). The percentage of in-house inmates comprised by inmates from other jurisdictions, per year, is provided in *Figure 10*.

Figure 10: Overall Percentage of Rural County Jail In-House Population Comprised of Other-Jurisdiction Transfers (2005-2011)



Source: PADOC, BJS

The average number of in-house inmates from other-jurisdictions per year (2005-2011), for each rural county jail, is shown in *Table 15*.

Table 15: Average Number of In-House Inmates from Other-Jurisdictions per Year, by County Jail (2005-2011)

County Jail	Average Number of Other-Jurisdiction Inmates	County Jail	Average Number of Other-Jurisdiction Inmates
Adams	27	<u>Lawrence</u>	52
Armstrong	19	Lycoming	20
Bedford	6	McKean	1
Blair	7	Mercer	3
Bradford	2	Mifflin	8
Butler	12	Monroe	5
<u>Cambria</u>	73	Montour	4
Carbon	5	Northumberland	6
Centre	22	Perry	26
Clarion	4	<u>Pike</u>	148

Clearfield	1	Potter	4
<u>Clinton</u>	172	Schuylkill	3
Columbia	25	<u>Snyder</u>	33
Crawford	0	Somerset	0
Elk	3	Susquehanna	< 1
Fayette	5	Tioga	7
Franklin	15	Union	1
Greene	11	Venango	5
Huntingdon	0	Warren	8
Indiana	18	Washington	2
Jefferson	4	Wayne	8
Juniata	< 1	Wyoming	4

*Underline denotes the top five counties in terms of number of other-jurisdiction inmates. Source: PADO, BJS*

The PADO entered into agreements with nine rural county jails (plus six additional urban county jails) to house excess inmates, with the first transfers beginning in June 2009. As of December 2010, the PADO transferred a total of 1,507 inmates to nine rural county jails.<sup>17</sup> These jails are shown in *Table 16*, along with the number of PADO inmates transferred and the average cost per day per inmate for each jail (2009-2010 average).<sup>18</sup> By comparison, the average cost per day to house an inmate in the PADO was \$89.82 in the 2009-2010 fiscal year (PADO, 2011b).

<sup>17</sup> An additional 433 state inmates were transferred to six urban county jails.

<sup>18</sup> The number of PADO transfers is not necessarily included in the data for in-house inmates from other jurisdictions, and the average cost per day per inmate is not necessarily the cost charged to the PADO for housing state inmates.

Table 16: Total Number of PADOc Inmate Transfers and Average Cost per Day per Inmate, by Receiving County (2009-2010)

County	Number of PADOc Transfers	Average Cost Per Day Per Inmate (2009-2010)
Armstrong	31	\$45.51
Bedford	171	\$55.46
Butler	56	\$79.05
Cambria	630	\$45.07
Centre	74	\$70.81
Clinton	250	\$53.09
Indiana	100	\$76.58
Lawrence	135	\$55.00*
Wayne	60	\$72.88

*\*Average Cost Per Day Per Inmate for Lawrence County is from 2007 only (the most recent figure available). Source: PADOc*

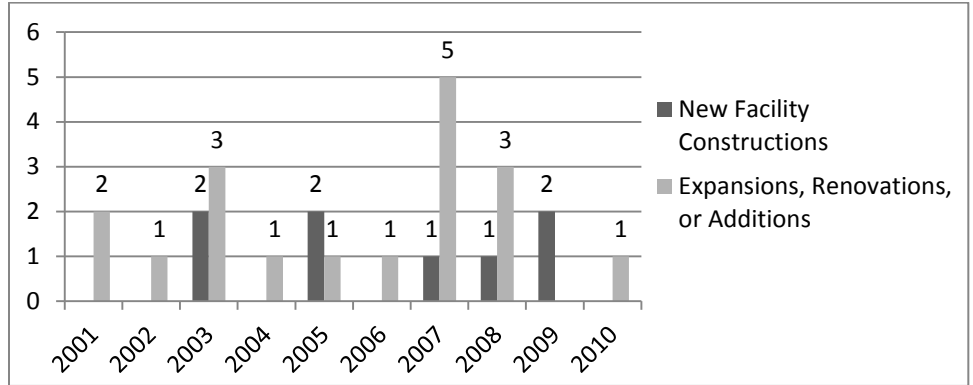
**Second Research Goal: Examine jail infrastructure (physical plant, finances, staffing, programs) over the study period.**

*Research Objective 2A: Determine the capital projects undertaken at each rural county jail.*

Nineteen jails (43 percent of all rural county jails) self-reported and described 26 major capital projects undertaken during the study period, including eight new facility constructions and 18 expansions, renovations, or additions (2001-2010). The number and type of major capital projects each year are shown in *Figure 11*.



Figure 11: Overall Rural County Jail Capital Projects Undertaken (2001-2010)



Source: PADOCC

Of the 19 jails with major capital projects during the study period, eleven (58 percent) of them were high population jails (defined as having averages greater than the system-wide mean) (Table 17). Most of them (18 jails, 95 percent), however, were below capacity (Table 18). Again, since the vast majority of jails were under capacity, it is difficult to explore differences between over and under capacity jails that undertook major capital projects.

Table 17: Number of Jails, by Major Capital Projects Undertaken (2001-2010) and Population (2004-2010)

		Major Capital Projects Undertaken		
		Yes	No	Total
Population	High	11	6	17
	Low	8	19	27
	Total	19	25	44

Source: PADOCC, BJS

Table 18: Number of Jails, by Major Capital Projects Undertaken (2001-2010) and Capacity  
(2005-2010)

		Major Capital Projects Undertaken		
		Yes	No	Total
Capacity	Above	1	2	3
	Below	18	23	41
	Total	19	25	44

Source: PADO, BJS

Most of the jails that had major capital projects were not heavily involved in inmate transfers; they were low on both housing their own inmates elsewhere (12 jails, 63 percent) (*Table 19*), and housing other-jurisdiction inmates (13 jails, 68 percent) (*Table 20*).

Table 19: Number of Jails, by Major Capital Projects Undertaken (2001-2010) and Inmates  
Housed Elsewhere (2006-2011)

		Major Capital Projects Undertaken		
		Yes	No	Total
Housed Elsewhere	High	7	4	11
	Low	12	21	33
	Total	19	25	44

Source: PADO

Table 20: Number of Jails, by Major Capital Projects Undertaken (2001-2010) and Housing Other-Jurisdiction Inmates (2005-2011)

		Major Capital Projects Undertaken		
		Yes	No	Total
Housing Other-Jurisdiction Inmates	High	6	6	12
	Low	13	19	32
	Total	19	25	44

Source: PADO, BJS

There was no discernible pattern between the age of the facility and major capital projects undertaken (*Table 21*).

Table 21: Number of Jails, by Age of Facility and Major Capital Projects Undertaken (2001-2011)

		Age of Facility						Total
		2000s – No Renovation	2000s + Renovation	1990s - No Renovation	1990s + Renovation	Before 1990 - No Renovation	Before 1990 + Renovation	
Major Capital Projects Undertaken	Yes	6	2	0	4	1	6	19
	No	1	0	7	3	4	10	25
	Total	7	2	7	7	5	16	44

Source: PADO

*Research Objective 2B: Identify the currently planned capital projects at each rural county jail.*

Rural county jail wardens were asked to describe current, approved plans to renovate, expand, or conduct any other major capital projects. Four jails described major capital projects underway or planned, including roof renovation, completion of a geothermal project, construction of a new work release center, and expansion of the current intake/booking area. The majority of the 36 survey respondents (33 jails, 92 percent) reported no capital projects planned or underway.

Of the four jails with capital projects planned, three (75 percent) of them were low (defined as having averages below the system-wide mean) in terms of population (2004-2010), capacity (2005-2010), and housing inmates elsewhere (2006-2011). Half of them were high on housing other-jurisdiction inmates (2005-2011), and three-quarters of them had high average costs per day per inmate (2004-2010).

*Research Objective 2C: examine each rural county jail's perceived major capital project needs.*

Rural county jail wardens were asked to describe any unmet major renovation, expansion, or other project needs. Sixteen wardens (44 percent of the 36 respondents) self-reported major capital project needs, listed by type and number of respondents (note that respondents could select more than one capital project need) in *Table 22*.

Table 22: Number of Respondents Reporting a Major Capital Project Need, by Project Category

<b>Project Category</b>	<b>Number of Respondents Reporting a Need</b>
New facility	5
Expansion of housing area	5
Expansion of medical department	1
Expansion of administrative area	1
Security fencing upgrades	1
Other additions, renovations	6

*Source: Survey (36 respondents)*

Many of the comments surrounding the self-identified need for a new or expanded facility related to issues with overcrowding and/or outdated and antiquated facilities. Three respondents noted a need for a new space to house inmates needing special programs or services (e.g., work release, females, restricted housing, mentally ill). One respondent who cited a need for a new facility specifically said the jail could capitalize on the deficit capacity that would result from such construction by selling excess space to other overcrowded corrections facilities. Other miscellaneous project needs included inmate shower upgrades, new roof, additional recreation yard, and fire damage reparations. The majority of the 36 respondents (20 wardens, 55 percent) reported no major capital project needs.

Of the ten jails reporting a major capital project need, most (six jails, 60 percent) were low population jails (2004-2010) (defined as having averages below the system-wide mean). Eight of them (80 percent) were low on housing their own inmates elsewhere (2006-2011), and all of them (100 percent) were also low on housing other-jurisdiction inmates (2005-2011). Likewise, most of the respondents without a major capital need were low on both housing their

own inmates elsewhere (17 jails, 73 percent) and housing other-jurisdiction inmates (16 jails, 62 percent).

Six of the ten jails with a major capital project need (60 percent) had high average costs per day per inmate; and 17 of those without a need (73 percent) had low average costs per day per inmate (*Table 23*). Thus, reporting a need for a capital project may reflect a desire to reduce the cost per inmate per day by constructing more modern and cost efficient facilities.

Table 23: Number of Jails, by Major Capital Project Need and Average Cost per Day per Inmate (2004-2010)

		Major Capital Project Need		
		Yes	No	Total
Average Cost Per Day Per Inmate	High	6	9	15
	Low	4	17	21
	Total	10	26	36

*Source: Survey (36 respondents)*

There was no discernible pattern between the age of the facility and capital project need (*Table 24*).

Table 24: Number of Jails, by Age of Facility and Major Capital Project Need (2001-2011)

		Age of Facility						Total
		2000s – No Renovation	2000s + Renovation	1990s - No Renovation	1990s + Renovation	Before 1990 - No Renovation	Before 1990 + Renovation	
Major Capital Project Need	Yes	0	1	3	1	1	4	10
	No	7	1	4	3	3	8	26
	Total	7	2	7	4	4	12	36

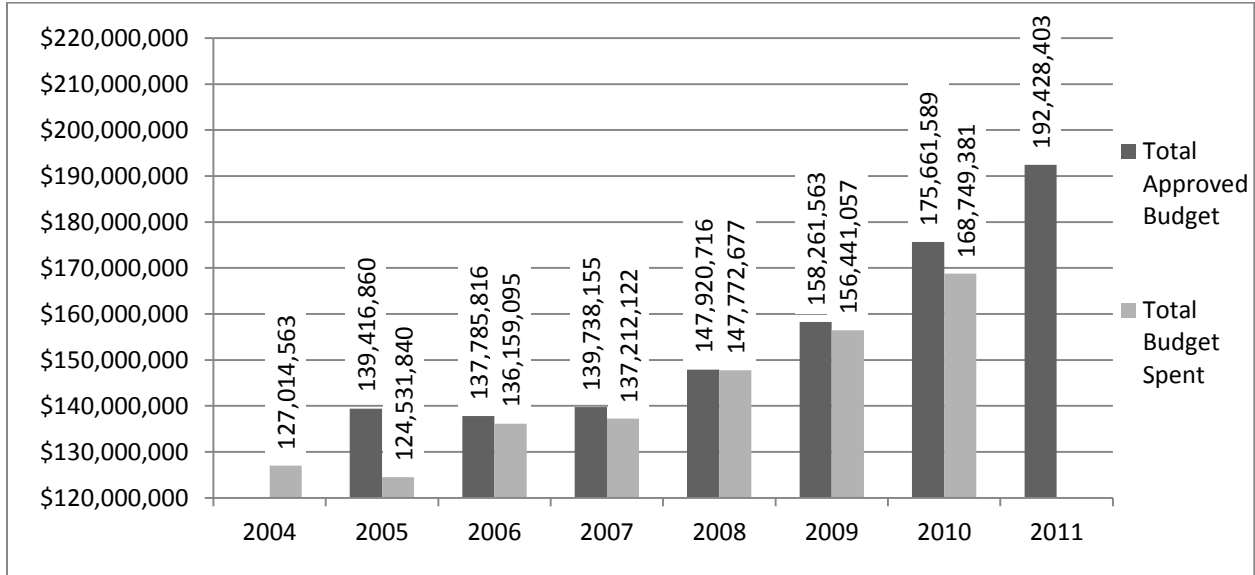
Source: Survey (36 respondents)

*Research Objective 2D: Determine the current operating budget for each rural county jail, including how this has changed during the study period and how per inmate costs compare to the state prison system.*

System-wide, the average total approved budget for the 44 rural county jails combined was \$155,887,586 per year (2005-2011), ranging from a minimum total approved budget of \$137,785,816 in 2006, to a maximum total approved budget of \$192,428,403 in 2011 (*Figure 12*).<sup>19</sup> The system-wide average total budget spent was \$142,554,391 per year (2004-2010), with a minimum total budget spent of \$124,531,840 in 2005, and maximum total budget spent of \$168,749,381 in 2010. As may be expected, all high-budget jails (16 jails, 100 percent) (defined as having averages greater than the system-wide mean) were also high-population jails, and most low-budget jails (27 jails, 96 percent) were low-population jails (*Table 25*).

<sup>19</sup> Throughout the report, financial figures have not been adjusted for inflation.

**Figure 12: Overall Rural County Jail Budget Approved and Spent (2004-2011)**



*Not adjusted for inflation. Source: PADOc*

**Table 25: Number of Jails, by Approved Budget (2005-2011) & Budget Spent (2004-2010) and Population (2004-2010)**

		Approved Budget & Budget Spent		
		High	Low	Total
Population	High	16	1	17
	Low	0	27	27
	Total	16	28	44

*Source: PADOc, BJS*

The average annual approved budget per jail was \$3,669,166, with a minimum average approved budget of \$747,302 per year, and a maximum average approved budget of \$9,785,244 per year (2005-2011). The average annual budget spent per jail was \$3,400,034, with a minimum



average budget spent of \$768,338 per year, and a maximum average budget spent of \$8,952,459 per year during the study period (2004-2010). These data are provided for each rural county jail in *Table 26*.

Table 26: Average Annual Approved Budget (2005-2011) and Average Annual Budget Spent (2005-2010), by County Jail

<b>County Jail</b>	<b>Approved Budget</b>	<b>Budget Spent</b>	<b>County Jail</b>	<b>Approved Budget</b>	<b>Budget Spent</b>
Adams	\$6,712,772	\$6,314,148	Lawrence	\$5,092,877	\$4,733,333 <sup>+</sup>
Armstrong	\$2,843,165	\$2,656,304	Lycoming	\$7,305,568	\$7,177,356
Bedford	\$2,830,245	\$2,888,296	McKean	\$2,001,866	\$2,071,837
Blair	\$4,241,051	\$4,322,136	Mercer	\$6,557,669	\$6,001,185
Bradford	\$2,766,871	\$2,507,909	Mifflin	\$2,224,460	\$2,196,228
Butler	\$8,137,187	\$6,588,474	Monroe	\$9,785,244	\$8,952,459
Cambria	\$6,448,891	\$5,390,693	Montour	\$747,302	\$783,678
Carbon	\$3,592,983	\$3,314,230	Northumberland	\$3,349,961	\$3,056,421
Centre	\$5,687,548	\$5,660,806	Perry	\$3,476,425	\$3,304,228
Clarion	\$2,125,812	\$2,008,894	Pike	\$8,577,351	\$8,167,476
Clearfield	\$2,762,175	\$2,616,065	Potter	\$911,588	\$768,338
Clinton	\$4,509,940	\$4,515,969	Schuylkill	\$3,889,285	\$3,718,889
Columbia	\$3,117,374	\$3,248,615	Snyder	\$2,257,440	\$2,610,613
Crawford	\$4,723,333	\$3,881,758	Somerset	\$2,233,234	\$2,173,132
Elk	\$1,902,606	\$1,849,021	Susquehanna	\$2,087,562	\$2,008,281
Fayette	\$4,129,528	\$3,823,832	Tioga	\$2,266,873	\$1,764,898
Franklin	\$7,777,978*	\$5,066,054*	Union	\$1,403,902	\$1,255,900
Greene	\$1,708,396	\$1,895,105	Venango	\$2,217,795	\$2,148,519

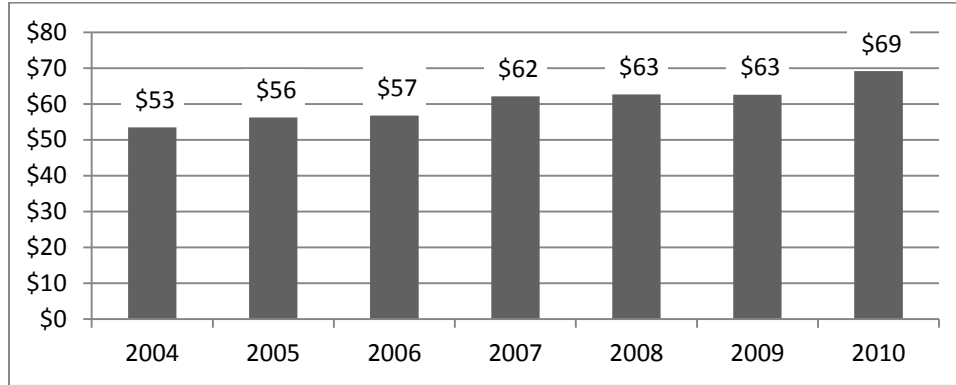
Huntingdon	\$1,696,758	\$1,625,348	Warren	\$2,515,546	\$2,463,670
Indiana	\$3,334,719	\$3,029,815	Washington	\$5,284,793	\$5,062,681
Jefferson	\$2,165,841	\$2,165,631	Wayne	\$1,974,427	\$1,778,127
Juniata	\$860,334	\$868,067	Wyoming	\$1,206,612	\$1,167,067

*\*Based on two years of available data. + Based on three years of available data. Not adjusted for inflation.*

*Source: PADO*

The system-wide mean average cost per day per inmate was \$60.41 during the study period (2004-2010) (*Figure 13*). Each county jail’s costs ranged from a minimum mean average cost per day per inmate of \$37.54 in Washington County, to a maximum mean average cost per day per inmate of \$127.71 in Potter County during the study period (2004-2010). By comparison, the state correctional institution’s mean average cost per day per inmate during the 2007-2010 fiscal years was \$88.23 (PADO, 2011b). Cost per day per inmate is influenced by a complex mix of a number of factors, including age of the facility, security levels of the inmates housed (higher security inmate require more staffing), average seniority level of the staff (long tenured staff will be earning higher salaries), union status of staff, inmate turnover rates (high turnover leads to higher costs due to intake and processing expenses for new inmates), and other factors. Older prisons are often more expensive to operate due to higher maintenance costs, but this can be somewhat offset by any of the other factors mentioned (e.g., less senior staff earning lower salaries). *Table 27* below provides some support for the conclusion that high population jails can achieve greater per inmate efficiencies.

Figure 13: Overall Rural County Jail System Average Cost per Day per Inmate (2004-2010)



*Not adjusted for inflation. Source: PADOc*

Of the 18 jails with high average costs per day (defined as having averages above the system-wide mean), 13 (72 percent) were low population jails (*Table 27*).

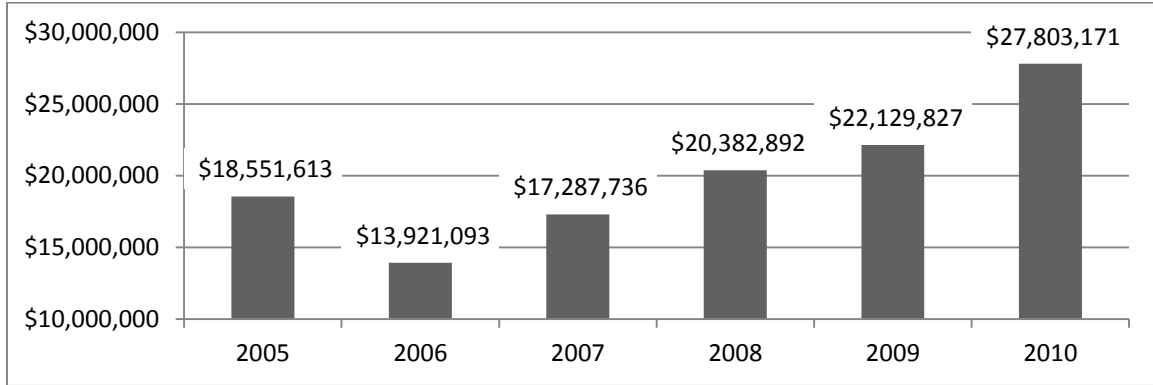
Table 27: Number of Jails, by Average Cost per Day per Inmate (2004-2010) and Population  
(2004-2010)

		Average Cost Per Day Per Inmate		
		High	Low	Total
Population	High	5	12	17
	Low	13	14	27
	Total	18	26	44

*Source: PADOc, BJS*

System-wide, the average total rural county jail gross revenue was \$20,012,722 per year (2005-2010), with minimum total gross revenue of \$13,921,093 in 2006, and maximum total gross revenue of \$27,803,171 in 2010 (*Figure 14*). Revenue sources include funds received for housing out of county inmates (including from Immigration and Customs Enforcement) and inmate fines/fees.

Figure 14: Overall Rural County Jail System Gross Revenue (2005-2010)



Not adjusted for inflation. Source: PADOCC

Per jail, the average annual gross revenue was \$490,801, with minimum average gross revenue of \$36,588 per year in Susquehanna County, and maximum average gross revenue of \$4,616,716 per year in Pike County during the study period (2004-2010).

*Research Objective 2E: Examine each rural county jail's perceived major financial challenges over the next five years.*

Rural county jail wardens were asked to select the top three financial challenges facing their jails. The financial challenge categories are listed in *Table 28* along with the number and percentage of respondents who selected the category as one of the top three challenges facing their jail.

Table 28: Number and Percentage of Respondents Who Selected Each Category as One of the Top Three Financial Challenges Facing Their Jail

<b>Financial Challenge</b>	<b>Number and Percentage of Respondents</b>
Medical and/or mental healthcare costs	27 (77%)
Staffing costs (wages, benefits, training)	24 (69%)
County budget cuts	15 (43%)
Physical plant costs (utilities, upkeep)	12 (34%)
Vendor/contractual costs (food, services)	11 (31%)
Costs associated with overcrowding	4 (11%)
Legal costs (inmate liability filings)	3 (9%)
Unfunded mandates (changes in law that are not financed and require use of local general funds to carry out)	3 (9%)
Other <sup>20</sup>	1 (3%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 (286%)<sup>21</sup></b>

*Source: Survey (35 respondents)*

The three most pressing financial challenges were medical/mental health costs, staffing costs, and county budget cuts, with medical/mental health costs being the predominant fiscal concern facing county jails. Costs for medical and mental health services are a challenge facing correctional systems nationwide (Kinsella, 2004). Inmates often arrive at the prison or jail with a significant constellation of medical and mental health needs that, in many cases, have not been previously addressed. Corrections agencies are also typically required by law to provide basic

<sup>20</sup> The respondent who selected “Other” cited costs associated with having to house female inmates in another county.

<sup>21</sup> Calculations were based on the 35 jails that responded to the survey and selected no more than three items. The total number adds to 100, not 105, and total percentage adds to 286 percent, not 300 percent, as there were five respondents (14 percent) for which only two selections were recorded.

levels of health care to their inmates (Allen et al., 2007). Thus, given the high demand and service mandate, it is not surprising that medical/mental health costs represent a significant financial challenge for the jails in this study.

*Research Objective 2F: Determine the current staffing level (including staffing ratios) for each rural county jail, using the following staff categories: Corrections Officers, Treatment Staff, Jail Administration/Management, Support Staff, Other.*<sup>22</sup>

Table 29 shows the system-wide average total number of persons per year within each staffing category during the study period (2005-2011).

Table 29: Overall Average Rural County Jail System Staff Persons per Year, by Staffing Category (2005-2011)

	Full-Time	Part-Time
Corrections Officers	1816	400
Treatment Staff	183	177
Administration/Management	197	12
Support Staff	171	50
Other Staff	46	14
Total Staff	2413	653

Source: PADOA

Table 30 shows the average total number of persons *per jail* within each staffing category during the study period (2005-2011).

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<sup>22</sup> The staffing categories were based on those derived by Young et al. (2009), however the rural jails used a variety of different staffing categories, in which case they were fit into the most comparable prescribed category.

Table 30: Per Jail Average Number of Staff Persons per Year, by Staffing Category (2005-2010)

	Full-Time	Part-Time
Corrections Officers	41	9
Treatment Staff	4	4
Administration/Management	4	0
Support Staff	4	1
Other Staff	1	0
Total Staff	54	14

Source: PADOCC

As is common to correctional systems nationwide, security staff personnel in the rural county jails comprise the bulk of personnel. During the study period (2005-2010), the system-wide average security staff-to-inmate ratio each year was one officer for every 3.2 inmates, and the average total staff-to-inmate ratio was one staff member to every 2.4 inmates.<sup>23</sup> Each jail's security staff-to-inmate ratio ranged from a minimum average of one officer to every six inmates in Schuylkill County, to a maximum average of one officer to every one inmate in Potter County during the study period (2005-2010). Each jail's total staff-to-inmate ratio ranged from a minimum average of one staff member to every 4.5 inmates in Schuylkill County, to a maximum of one staff member to every 0.6 inmates in Potter County during the study period (2005-2010).<sup>24</sup> These staffing data are shown for each rural county jail in *Table 31*.

<sup>23</sup> Calculations are based on the average daily in-house inmate population.

<sup>24</sup> Ratios are provided for informational purposes only. Comparison between institutions based on relative staffing ratios is regarded as an inaccurate practice due to the complexities involved in staffing decisions and jail characteristics (Liebert & Miller, 2003).

Table 31: Average Security Staff-to-Inmate Ratio Total Staff-to-Inmate Ratio per Year, by  
County Jail (2005-2010)

County Jail	Security Staff-to-Inmate	Total Staff-to-Inmate	County Jail	Security Staff-to-Inmate	Total Staff-to-Inmate
Adams	1:2.8	1:2.2	Lawrence	1:3.6	1:2.7
Armstrong	1:2.7	1:2.2	Lycoming	1:5.4	1:2.8
Bedford	1:3	1:2.3	McKean	1:3.6	1:2.6
Blair	1:4.3	1:3.4	Mercer	1:3.2	1:2.3
Bradford	1:3.3	1:2.4	Mifflin	1:3.2	1:2.3
Butler	1:3.4	1:2.4	Monroe	1:3.2	1:2.4
Cambria	1:4.4	1:3.5	Montour	1:2.3	1:1.4
Carbon	1:2.7	1:2.2	Northumberland	1:3.8	1:2.9
Centre	1:3.1	1:2.2	Perry	1:2.8	1:1.7
Clarion	1:3	1:1.9	Pike	1:3	1:2.1
Clearfield	1:4	1:3.1	Potter	1:1	1:0.6
Clinton	1:5.5	1:4	Schuylkill	1:6	1:4.5
Columbia	1:3.4	1:2.9	Snyder	1:2.1	1:1.7
Crawford	1:2.9	1:2.3	Somerset	1:2.4	1:1.6
Elk	1:1.7	1:1.2	Susquehanna	1:2.2	1:1.7
Fayette	1:4.3	1:3.5	Tioga	1:1.8	1:1.2
Franklin	1:3.9	1:2.8	Union	1:2.9	1:1.6
Greene	1:3.4	1:2.7	Venango	1:3.8	1:2.9
Huntingdon	1:2.3	1:1.9	Warren	1:4.2	1:3.2
Indiana	1:2.8	1:1.9	Washington	1:5.4	1:3.9
Jefferson	1:2.8	1:1.9	Wayne	1:2.2	1:1.8



Juniata	1:2.5	1:1.4	Wyoming	1:2	1:1.3
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Source: PADO, BJS

*Research Objective 2G: Identify treatment/rehabilitative services/programs (drug treatment, GED, etc.) offered at each rural county jail.*

This study collected data on both the level of treatment services being offered (i.e., hours of service per week), as well as the specific types of programs and services being delivered. The OCIS dataset collected from the PADO listed specific programs offered at each jail, showing specific program name or at least program type (i.e., drug treatment). While information was not available on important program characteristics such as the qualifications of staff delivering the programs or the number of inmates in each treatment group, the OCIS program dataset does allow for broad benchmarking of these programs against what is known in the research literature about evidence-based correctional programs, as discussed in greater detail below.

System-wide, rural county jails offered an average of 17 hours of drug and alcohol treatment per week; 22 hours of education programs per week; 11 hours of social services programs per week; and 28 hours of counseling programs per week during the study period (2005-2010). Note that these are the number of hours that a treatment provider is available and that programs operate, but there may be considerable variation in the number of hours of treatment an individual inmate actually receives (Lieutenant Sandra Leonowicz, Prison Inspector, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, Office of County Inspection and Services, personal communication, January 2012).

It is difficult to conclude whether the amount of treatment services delivered to the county jail inmates reported above (in hours) is sufficient. As a general rule, the literature on effective correctional programming (see further discussion of this below) indicates that

individual clients should be occupied in structured treatment program and related activities for 40 to 70 percent of their time in order to maximize treatment effects, and that programs should last between three to nine months, depending upon the goals of the program and the needs of the client (Andrews & Bonta, 2003). Programs that follow these guidelines are characterized as high intensity programs. Low intensity programs – those that offer only a few hours of service per week to individual clients – are found to be much less effective than more intensive programs.

Turning to program type, this study found a wide variety of program types being offered at the 44 rural county jails. There was a fair degree of consistency in program offerings across the time period of the study, although not all counties reported program information for all of the years covered by this study. Thus, the following discussion represents a composite of programs offered by the rural jails across the study time period. The researchers grouped the various program offerings reported by the jails into the following 11 categories (in order of frequency of being offered in the county jails): Educational/Vocational Programs; Substance Abuse Treatment/Services; General Psychological Counseling; Anger/Stress Management Programs; Parenting Programs; Reentry Programs; Life Skills Programs; Sex Offender Programs; Programs Targeting Criminal Thinking and Decision Making Skills; Other Programs; and Non-Evidence-Based Programs. The prevalence of these programs in the 44 rural county jails during the study period is summarized in *Table 32*. As discussed later, jails are typically required to provide educational services (to selected inmates) and mental health services, but other program types are more discretionary.

Table 32: Number and Percentage of Rural Jails Offering Treatment Programming, by Program

Category (2004-2011)

<b>Program Category</b>	<b>Number and Percentage of Jails</b>
Educational/Vocational Programs*	44 (100%)
Substance Abuse Treatment/Services*	44 (100%)
General Psychological Counseling	44 (100%)
Anger/Stress Management Programs	32 (73%)
Parenting Programs	31 (70%)
Reentry Programs	27 (61%)
Life Skills Programs	20 (45%)
Sex Offender Programs*	11 (25%)
Programs Targeting Criminal Thinking and Decision Making Skills*	7 (16%)
Other Programs	29 (66%)
Non-Evidence-Based Programs	12 (27%)

*\*Denotes evidence-based program, see discussion below.*

*Source: PADO, 2011 data from county jails' websites.*

Program density, or the total number of each category of program offered at a given jail (except non-evidence-based programming) was also examined. Of the 18 jails with high program density (defined as having averages above the system-wide mean), 11 (61 percent) were also high population jails (*Table 33*). Likewise, the majority of those low on program density (20 jails, 77 percent) were low population jails. This same pattern was evident in the relationship between density and operating budget – the majority of jails high on program density (11 jails,

61 percent) were also high budget jails, and those low on program density (21 jails, 81 percent) were low budget jails (*Table 34*).

Table 33: Number of Jails, by Program Density (2004-2011) and Population (2004-2010)

		Program Density		
		High	Low	Total
Population	High	11	6	17
	Low	7	20	27
	Total	18	26	44

*Source: PADO, BJS*

Table 34: Number of Jails, by Program Density (2004-2011) and Approved Budget (2005-2011) & Budget Spent (2004-2010)

		Program Density		
		High	Low	Total
Approved Budget & Budget Spent	High	11	5	16
	Low	7	21	28
	Total	18	26	44

*Source: PADO*

As a preface to the examination of the specific types of programs being offered at the rural county jails, this report begins with an overview of what constitutes an effective correctional program. This review will allow for some broad conclusions about the effectiveness of the programs being offered in the rural jails. There is an extensive body of research on what constitutes an effective correctional treatment program, and what differentiates effective,

evidence-based programs from ineffective programs (Andrews & Bonta, 2003; MacKenzie, 2006). This body of correctional research is commonly referred to as the “what works” literature (MacKenzie, 2006). In most of this research, effective, evidence-based correctional programs are defined as those that are likely to reduce recidivism and to promote other pro-social outcomes in inmates, such as sobriety and employment. Ineffective programs do not produce these effects, although they may have some impact on other outcomes not related to recidivism, such as improving the subjective sense of well-being of the offender. Again, while these types of outcomes may be desirable from a humanitarian perspective, they show little relationship to recidivism or to other critical reentry outcomes (Gendreau et al., 1996).

There are many important aspects to understanding evidence-based correctional programming, including the characteristics and treatment needs of inmates who are placed into programs, dosage or quantity of treatment given, characteristics of staff facilitating the programs, manner in which the programs are delivered, and program leadership. Many of these factors were beyond the scope of the current study. Given the information available to this study through the OCIS dataset, though, the most relevant program feature examined in this report is the specific type of program being delivered and the inmate treatment needs that are being addressed by the program.

The “what works” literature has identified specific types of programs that are likely to be effective if they are implemented properly, other programs that are unlikely to be effective regardless of how well they are implemented, and still other programs about which there is insufficient knowledge.

The following types of programs are found to be effective in reducing recidivism for adult offenders: programs targeting antisocial attitudes that are supportive of criminal behavior

(cognitive restructuring); programs targeting decision making, problem solving, and coping skills (cognitive skills); programs targeting antisocial peer associates (delinquency networks); programs targeting self-control/self-regulation; programs targeting substance use (inpatient/residential and intensive outpatient programs); programs targeting educational and vocational deficits; specialized programs targeting sex offenders; and programs targeting social and family relationships. Within this category, the most effective program types are those that address anti-social attitudes and decision making skills, commonly referred to as “criminal thinking” (Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005). Such programs most commonly use what is known as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), which is a structured approach to changing how offenders think about their behavior and how they make decisions that affect their behavior in real world situations.

The following types of programs, by themselves, are found to be ineffective in reducing recidivism for adult offenders: programs targeting personal/emotional distress and subjective well-being (e.g., pure psychotherapy); programs targeting anxiety/self-esteem; programs targeting physical and mental health; programs targeting socio-economic status; programs targeting other types of issues such as artistic skill and creativity; programs relying solely on discipline and punishment (e.g., boot camps or other programs that rely on shaming); and other types of vague, unstructured programs with no clear targets that are related to criminal behavior (MacKenzie, 2006).

The following types of programs do not have enough research behind them to know if they are effective or ineffective in reducing recidivism for adult offenders: programs targeting parenting skills; broad based reentry programs that focus on structural factors such as getting a

job, resume writing, and general social service brokerage; general purpose life skills programs; and programs for psychopathic offenders.

The following is a summary of the program types being offered in the 44 rural county jails, using the eleven categories introduced earlier. These program types are also discussed in relation to the preceding review of evidence based practice in correctional treatment.

Education/Vocational Programs – All 44 of the rural jails (100 percent) reported offering some sort of educational or vocational program during the study time period. This program category can include GED preparation, Adult Basic Education, Special Education, other general education courses, as well as specific vocational training tracks. The frequency of educational programs in these jails is not surprising, as correctional institutions are required to offer educational services to inmates under the age of 21, and it is also common to offer services such as GED preparation to inmates of all ages (Allen et al., 2007). The vast majority of jails reported that their educational services were being delivered largely by local school districts or intermediate units, augmented by in-house jail teaching staff. As an aside, it is also not uncommon in correctional institutions for inmates themselves to serve as tutors to other inmates (Allen et al., 2007), although no data was specifically noted on this. As discussed above, educational/vocational programs are evidence-based correctional services.

Substance Abuse Treatment/Services – All 44 rural county jails (100 percent) also reported offering some sort of substance abuse or related services during the study time period. The broad category of “substance abuse treatment/services” reported here actually conceals a wide variety of different program subtypes, however. Based upon the rural county jail program data available to this study, the researchers further broke this category out into the following sub-types: drug

and alcohol education programs; drug and alcohol self-help groups (e.g., AA); relapse prevention; individual or group counseling; inpatient/residential treatment; and other/miscellaneous. As discussed above, substance abuse programs, as a broad category, are evidence-based. Some specific subtypes of substance abuse programs, however, are more effective than others. Specifically, the strongest evidence of effectiveness exists for inpatient/residential treatment, individual and group counseling, and relapse prevention (Mitchell et al., 2007; Welsh & Zajac, 2004a). Indeed, the evidence for inpatient treatment, commonly referred to in the prison setting as a therapeutic community, is especially strong (Welsh & Zajac, 2004b). Conversely, there is little or no evidence of effectiveness for self-help programs and drug and alcohol education programs (e.g., DARE). Thus, it matters what specific type of substance abuse program is being offered.

The most common type of substance abuse program offered in rural county jails were self-help programs (44 jails, or 100 percent). Again, as with substance abuse education (17 jails, or 39 percent), these types of programs show little evidence of effectiveness yet they are commonly found in correctional institutions and are relatively easy and inexpensive to deliver, often relying on volunteer staff, even inmate peer counselors (Taxman et al., 2007). Indeed, the jails in this study most commonly reported that their self-help groups were being delivered by outside organizations.

While both are evidence-based programming categories, individual and group counseling (38 jails, or 86 percent) was more prevalently offered than relapse prevention programs (nine jails, or 20 percent). Less commonly offered was inpatient/residential drug treatment (three jails, or seven percent), which, again, is generally regarded as the most evidence-based of the various types of substance abuse programs. Given the expense and difficulty of operating (or contracting



for) residential substance abuse programs, it is perhaps not surprising that few of the rural county jails are operating such services. Finally, 16 jails (36 percent) reported offering some other type of substance abuse program.

General Psychological Counseling – General psychological counseling was also reportedly offered by all 44 rural jails (100 percent) during the study time period. As with educational/vocational programs, this is not a surprising finding. Correctional institutions of all types are generally required by law and/or accreditation standards to offer at least basic psychological services to inmates with mental disorders (Allen et al., 2007). As with the educational programs, the vast majority of the jails reported using outside vendors to deliver mental health services, although some jails also reported having in-house mental health professionals. Building an in-house mental health staff can be a challenge for small jails. While mental health services are a necessity within correctional institutions, as noted above, there is little evidence that general psychological counseling by itself contributes greatly to recidivism risk reduction.

Anger/Stress Management Programs – Thirty-two of the rural jails (73 percent) reported offering some type of anger management program. The research on anger management programs is mixed, but generally few treatment effects are found from such programs by themselves (Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005). It is also unclear what role anger itself plays in recidivism, even for violent offenders (Mills & Kroner, 2003).

Parenting Programs – Programs targeting parenting were offered by 31 of the rural jails (70 percent). Such programs typically focus on providing information on child development and child care, teaching basic parenting skills, and sometimes attempting to build more positive attitudes towards parental responsibilities, although there can often be significant variation in program content from one institution to the other (Loper & Tuerk, 2006). While parenting programs have been found to have some effects on parenting knowledge, skills, and attitudes, these effects are inconsistent, and generally no effects are found on recidivism (Loper & Tuerk, 2006; Skarupski, 2003; Surratt, 2003). One of the greatest challenges facing inmate parenting programs is that the most effective parenting programs generally rely upon intensive involvement and interaction between the parents and their children, in order to afford parents the opportunity to practice skills they have learned in the program (Kaminski et al., 2008). This can be problematic in a prison/jail setting, as visitation by inmates’ families is often fragmented or inconsistent, and the prison setting itself allows for only limited interaction between the inmates and their children.

Over the longer term, improved parenting skills of inmates may have some effect on the delinquency of their children over the life course, but the connection between delinquency reduction and jail-based parenting programs has not been established (Wright & Beaver, 2005). Still, parenting programs remain popular in prison settings, in part because they are relatively easy to deliver.

Reentry Programs – The majority of jails provided reentry programs, with 27 (61 percent) offering some sort of reentry programming or services during the study time period. There was significant variation in the type of reentry programming offered, with some jails reporting

programs directly relating to reentry (and even called by that name), but with many others offering more general programs, such as work release, job skills, and referral to community services, which can be placed into the reentry category. As discussed earlier, there is insufficient evidence to determine whether broad-based reentry programs are effective, although a few major studies of reentry programs have found little effect from them (Smith, 2008; Wilson & Davis, 2006). One key issue surrounding reentry programs is that they are often “catch all” programs that offer a variety of services that can vary from one jurisdiction to the other, and may often be uncoordinated, poorly structured, and bear little relationship to factors that are important to reducing recidivism (Bucklen & Zajac, 2009). What one jail calls a reentry program may differ greatly from what another jail calls a reentry program. Thus, while reentry programs can be a valuable part of an overall package of inmate programming, careful attention must be paid to how such programs are structured and operated, and exactly what sorts of services are being delivered under the rubric of reentry.

Life Skills Programs – Life skills programs were less commonly offered, with 20 (45 percent) of the rural jails offering some sort of life skills programming or services during the study time period. As with general reentry programming, life skills programs can vary widely between institutions, and may sometimes be subsumed under reentry programs. Life skills programming can cover a variety of different factors, such as financial management (e.g., opening and maintaining a checking account), securing housing, and, for lower functioning inmates, even activities of daily living, such as personal hygiene and dress. As noted above, there is insufficient evidence about the effects of general life skills programs by themselves on recidivism.

Sex Offender Programs – Programs specifically targeting sex offenders were offered by 11 (25 percent) of the rural jails. Sex offender programs can be some of the most difficult types of programs to operate, requiring specialized staff and dedicated groups. Sex offender treatment is also often a long term proposition, with some programs running for a year or longer (Losel & Schmucker, 2005). Thus, it was somewhat surprising to see that any of the county jails were offering such programming.

Programs Targeting Criminal Thinking and Decision Making Skills – As discussed earlier, programs that target factors such as anti-social attitudes, anti-social peer associates, poor decision making and problem solving skills, and related cognitive factors, are found to be some of the most effective types of offender programming. These types of programs are often referred to as cognitive restructuring/skills building programs, utilizing a specific program approach called cognitive-behavioral therapy, or CBT. CBT can be delivered within the context of a stand-alone program, or basic CBT techniques can also be incorporated into other types of programs, such as substance abuse programs. Stand-alone curricula include programs like the widely used *Thinking for a Change* program, which was developed by the National Institute of Corrections, and is available free of charge to correctional agencies. The PADO, for example, operates *Thinking for a Change* in most of the State Correctional Institutions. Other examples of widely used CBT curricula include *Changing Offender Behavior*, and *Moral Reconation Therapy*.

Very few of the 44 rural county jails, however, reported offering anything that could be identified as addressing criminal thinking or decision making skills, with only seven (16 percent) of the rural jails offering some sort of clearly identifiable criminal thinking or CBT program during the study time period. Examples of specific, “off the shelf” criminal thinking programs

being offered at the jails include *Thinking for a Change* and *Moral Reconation Therapy*. But, overall, very little use is being made of this evidence-based program type.

Other Programs – Twenty-nine of the rural jails (66 percent) reported offering other types of programs that could not easily be placed into one of the above categories. Examples include women’s programs, veterans’ programs, and victim impact programs. Absent a more detailed evaluation of exactly what is being offered in these programs, and how it is being provided, it is difficult to determine if they are evidence-based.

Non-Evidence-Based Programs – Finally, 12 of the rural jails (27 percent) reported offering other types of programs that on their face appear to fall squarely into the category of non-evidence-based programs. Examples include art therapy, crafts, self-empowerment, self-esteem, wellness, teen challenge, meditation, nutrition, and cultural diversity. As discussed earlier, such programs may serve some legitimate purposes, such as keeping inmates busy or general enrichment, but there is absolutely no evidence that such program types have any impact on recidivism. While it is possible that these programs are merely ancillary to more substantive programs also offered by the jails in question, the fact that the jails named them among their offerings suggests that they consider them to be of sufficient importance to include in their programming list.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Despite a steadily increasing overall population (total rural county jail inmate population increased 17 percent between 2004-2010), the capacity of Pennsylvania’s rural county jail

system has also increased (and percentage of capacity decreased). Thus, it still appears poised to act as an available relief valve to other jurisdictions' crowding issues. In fact, the rural county jail system, overall, received almost double the number of inmates from other jurisdictions as it housed elsewhere during the study period. System-wide, rural county jails averaged 84 percent capacity per year, with 93 percent of jails below capacity during the study period. The majority of the jails that were high on housing other-jurisdiction inmates were below capacity and had low average costs per day per inmate. Indeed, the 2010 average cost per day per inmate in rural county jails ranged from \$40 (Northumberland County) to \$134.02 (Elk County), with 90 percent<sup>25</sup> of rural jails reporting an average cost per day per inmate lower than the PADOc's \$89.82 (PADOc, 2011b).

In fact, the state prison system has been under tremendous population pressure over the past several years. Beginning in June 2009, the PADOc entered into agreements with nine rural county jails to house excess inmates and had transferred a total of 1,507 inmates to nine rural within 18 months. In addition to sending state inmates to county jails, the PADOc transferred more than 2,000 inmates to state prisons in Michigan and Virginia as part of its efforts to relieve its population pressures.<sup>26</sup> Population management is all the more critical in light of the provision of Act 81 of 2008, which will result in more sentenced offenders being sentenced to state prison, as opposed to county jails, and perhaps an increasing reliance on county jails housing state transferred inmates. Provided it is properly financed and managed, then, Pennsylvania's rural county jail system has the potential to alleviate overcrowding issues demonstrated by other jurisdictions across the state.

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<sup>25</sup> Thirty-seven of the 41 jails that reported 2010 data.

<sup>26</sup> The inmates housed in Michigan have since been transferred back to Pennsylvania, and PADOc may be planning to reclaim the Virginia-housed inmates (Reilly, 2011).

While facing population management pressures, and helping to relieve other jurisdictions of overcrowding, 77 percent of respondents reported medical and/or mental healthcare costs as one of their top financial challenges. Given that rural county jails inherit the responsibility of inmate health care when receiving other-jurisdiction transfers, ensuring they have the financial resources to provide the services seems to be a critically important issue. Moreover, if rural county jails are to properly manage the influx of other-jurisdictional transfers, their available staffing complement needs to be appropriately financed. However, 69 percent of respondents listed staffing costs, including wages, benefits, and training, as one of the top financial challenges facing their jails.

Another important consideration for inter-jurisdictional transfers is the quality of rehabilitative programs and services available within the rural county jails. This study found that the 44 rural county jails are indeed offering program and treatment services that can be classified as evidence-based. All of the jails reported offering some sort of educational/vocational programming, general psychological counseling, and substance abuse/treatment services. As discussed earlier, educational/vocational deficits and substance abuse are both appropriate targets for evidence-based treatment, but there is little evidence that general psychological counseling by itself contributes greatly to recidivism risk reduction.

Other types of important evidence-based programming, however, were not as common. Most notably, this study found little evidence that the jails were offering any sort of programming that targets factors such as anti-social attitudes, anti-social peers, poor decision making, and problem solving skills. Such programs are often referred to as cognitive-behavioral therapy, or CBT programs. Only 16 percent of jails reported offering any programs that could be identified as explicitly fitting this model, although a CBT focus may be subsumed within other

programs being offered, such as substance abuse treatment. Again, a strong body of correctional research finds that CBT programs produce the largest recidivism reduction effects.

Rural jails reported offering many types of programs whose effects on recidivism are unclear or have not been sufficiently researched. These include parenting programs, anger management, life skills, and broad-based reentry programs. Indeed, a majority of jails reported offering some level of these types of programs (63 percent).

More than one-quarter of the jails (27 percent) reported offering programs that have either shown no effect on recidivism, or are not clearly related to the goal of recidivism reduction. These include programs focusing on nutrition, arts and crafts, meditation, and women's studies. While these programs may contribute to the general wellbeing of the inmates, they cannot be considered evidence-based treatment.

Moreover, within the category of substance abuse programs, the majority of the programs being offered utilize specific program models, such as self-help groups, that produce only very modest effects by themselves. Very few of the jails (seven percent) were offering more intensive residential substance abuse programs, which have been found to produce significant treatment effects.

This study represents the most comprehensive narrative and dataset of issues related to Pennsylvania rural county jails, constituting a solid basis for future research on this topic. Moreover, this study can provide a basis for data-driven state and local prison bed space and program management, as well as budget and capital project-related decisions.



## **POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

First, the results of this study provide a useful summary report on county jail populations, infrastructure and programs, and may aid in population management efforts. Given the overcrowding issues faces by local and state agencies, the data derived by this study, especially those related to capacity and costs per day per inmate for each jail, may be used to inform economical approaches to distributing sentenced offenders between the state and county correctional systems. Other states, most notably California, have used this approach (Vera Institute of Justice, 2010). For example, California is transferring tens of thousands of primarily non-violent inmates from state prisons to county jails in response to extreme and longstanding overcrowding in the state prison system, which has resulted in intervention by the federal courts (Dolan, 2011).

Next, this study offered an in-depth analysis of the available rural county jail programs, the results of which may be used to inform rural county jails' decisions to augment their current offerings, whether by eliminating or adding certain types of programs. While the jails are offering a wide variety of programs and services, much of this program activity focuses on services that are non-evidence-based, have uncertain effects, or do not utilize the most effective treatment modalities. To be more effective in reducing recidivism, the Pennsylvania's rural county jails could shift resources towards program types that show the strongest impact on recidivism, most especially programs addressing criminal thinking and decision making skills and utilizing cognitive-behavioral approaches, while devoting less time to non-evidence-based programs.

As noted earlier, while this study has documented the presence of various types of programs within the county jails, a more detailed examination of the quality of these programs

was beyond the scope of this study. Valuable insight would be gained by an evaluation of program quality in at least some of the jails, examining factors such as qualifications of program leadership and staff, appropriate placement of inmates into programs that match their needs, fidelity of program implementation, and the correspondence of the programs as delivered to the principles of effective intervention. Such an evaluation would allow for stronger conclusions about the potential for these county jail programs to reduce recidivism, and would generate suggestions for program improvements.

Finally, this study has the potential to impact the county jail data management systems. County jail data are often fragmented, incomplete, and unreliable. In Pennsylvania, as in most states, county jails operate under policies and procedures promulgated by the local county government, which, in effect, results in 63 separate correctional systems. Without a stronger network and more comprehensive data collection and management, research and jail development efforts are hindered. This project served to test the adequacy of the Pennsylvania data system specifically, finding that while the relevant data is collected, it is not generally retained beyond a five year period. It is difficult to make fully informed decisions about state and county jail population management without robust data systems. Thus, another recommendation is to create better data management practices, to include taking deliberate steps to preserve the information collected beyond just five years. Ideally, this data management would be performed by a single entity so as ensure standardized administration practices. This study represents the most comprehensive narrative and dataset of issues related to Pennsylvania rural county jails, constituting a solid basis for future research on this topic.

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## **APPENDIX A – SURVEY INSTRUMENT**



# PENNSYLVANIA RURAL COUNTY JAIL SURVEY

*Please return in the envelope we have provided by September 16, 2011*

As the Jail Warden/Director, please complete the following survey, which asks about capital projects, challenges, transfers, and other issues related to your jail operation. We at the Penn State University Justice Center for Research recognize the unique concerns and increasing importance of rural county corrections systems, and are working to develop a more complete understanding of the issues facing jails like yours. Currently, there is very little formal research on rural jails, and the available information is fragmented and incomplete. Accordingly, your feedback is critical to understanding this important and complex area. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and you have the right to refuse to answer any question. The Center for Rural Pennsylvania, a legislative service agency of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, requested and sponsored this project. Please feel free to attached additional pages if needed.

## Part A: Capital Projects

1. Approved capital projects: Please describe any current, approved plans to renovate, expand, or conduct any other major capital projects at your jail (for example, add a new cell block or building):

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2. Unmet capital project needs: Aside from the approved capital projects discussed in Question 1 above, what do you feel are other unmet major renovation, expansion, or other capital project needs at your jail?

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## Part B: Financial Challenges

1. Please select the top three (3) major financial challenges facing your jail:
  - County budget cuts
  - Medical and/or mental healthcare costs
  - Vendor/contractual costs (food, services)
  - Staffing costs (wages, benefits, training)
  - Legal costs (inmate liability filings)
  - Physical plant costs (utilities, upkeep)

- Costs associated with overcrowding
- Unfunded mandates (changes in law that are not financed and require use of local general funds to carry out)
- Other (please explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Part C: General Information Forms

1. Each year, your jail submits a General Information Form (GIF) to the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Office of County Inspection & Services. We are missing this form for a few years for your jail. Can you please enclose a copy of your jail's GIF for the following years:

- 2002
- 2003
- 2004
- 2005

Also: GIFs from Franklin (2006, 2008), Lawrence (2009), Montour (2010), & Schuylkill (2009)

If you do not have copies of your GIF for these years, but you can provide documents or records with similar information, please include them in the return envelope, or email them to Dr. Gary Zajac at [gxz3@psu.edu](mailto:gxz3@psu.edu), or Lindsay Kowalski at [lko103@psu.edu](mailto:lko103@psu.edu).

**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS SURVEY!**

## **APPENDIX B – CODEBOOK & DATABASE**