

MF-1

United States General Accounting Office

GAO

Report to the Chairman, Committee on
the District of Columbia, House of
Representatives

September 1987

DISTRICT OF
COLUMBIA

Inmate Participation in
Correctional Programs
and Previous Lorton
Confinements

109826



NCJRS
JAN 12 1988
ACQUISITIONS

109826

**U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice**

This document has been reproduced exactly as received from the person or organization originating it. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the National Institute of Justice.

Permission to reproduce this copyrighted material has been granted by

U.S. General Accounting Office

to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS).

Further reproduction outside of the NCJRS system requires permission of the copyright owner.



United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

General Government Division

B-224695

September 11, 1987

The Honorable Ronald V. Dellums
Chairman, Committee on the
District of Columbia
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As you requested, this report provides information on offenders confined at the District of Columbia's correctional complex at Lorton, Virginia. Specifically, the report addresses (1) Lorton inmates' District felony convictions and their previous incarcerations at Lorton, (2) Lorton's efforts to determine the types of programs that its inmates need to receive, and (3) inmates' participation in and completion of Lorton programs.

As arranged with your office, unless you publicly announce the contents of this report earlier, we plan no further distribution until 30 days from the date of this report. At that time, we will send copies of the report to the Mayor of the District of Columbia, the Director of the District's Department of Corrections, congressional committees having a jurisdictional interest in District or prison matters, and other interested parties.

Sincerely yours,

Arnold P. Jones
Senior Associate Director

Executive Summary

Purpose

The District of Columbia's correctional complex at Lorton, Virginia, has experienced overcrowding and security problems which have led to court ordered limits on Lorton's population and requirements to improve programs provided to male inmates. Concerned about recidivism and inmates' participation in correctional programs, the Chairman, House Committee on the District of Columbia, asked GAO to determine how many inmates were (1) previously convicted of District felonies (offenses with sentences of more than a year) and imprisoned at Lorton; and (2) recommended for and participated in the various educational, work, psychological, and substance abuse programs offered at Lorton. Consequently, GAO reviewed records kept on randomly selected inmates for a 62-month period ending February 28, 1986.

Background

As of June 30, 1987, Lorton housed about 5,600 male inmates in nine separate and generally autonomous facilities. Overall, the inmate population exceeded the facilities' court ordered or architectural capacities by 24 percent. Of the nine facilities, two housed young adult males imprisoned under the youth sentencing procedures. (See pp. 10 and 11.)

Lorton facilities offer various types of education, work, psychological, and substance abuse programs so that inmates can stay productively busy; develop or improve work skills, habits, and literacy; and enhance their potential for a law-abiding life after prison. (See pp. 20 and 21.) Inmates are recommended for programs through classification—a process where the inmates' caseworkers and other prison officials review the inmates' background, identify the inmates' housing, security, and program needs, and develop a plan to meet those needs. Inmates are to be initially classified shortly after entering Lorton and after transferring from one Lorton facility to another and are to be reclassified at least annually (adults) or semiannually (young adults) to monitor progress and reassess needs. (See pp. 16, 30, and 31.)

Results in Brief

About 70 percent of the 57 adult inmates GAO sampled had been convicted of multiple felonies and previously imprisoned at Lorton. About 10 percent of the 47 sampled young adult inmates had previously been confined at Lorton.

Classification documentation did not exist for all of the inmates GAO sampled. As a result, the District's Department of Corrections and Lorton management officials did not know whether all Lorton inmates were being classified as required by Department of Corrections' policies. In

May 1987, the Department began implementing a revised classification system which, if done properly, should correct the problem.

During the 62-month period that GAO reviewed, most of the sampled inmates participated in one or more of the programs for which they were recommended. At the end of the period, the inmates had completed or were still participating in over half of their recommended programs. To reduce inmate idleness, Department of Corrections officials are now requiring all inmates to participate in work programs unless they participate in other programs.

Principal Findings

Inmates' Criminal History

Thirty-nine of 57 adults and 5 of 47 young adults GAO sampled had been imprisoned previously at one of the Lorton facilities. On average, the adult inmates sampled had been convicted of nearly five District felonies each and the young adults nearly two felonies each. Drug offenses, robbery, and other theft-type offenses accounted for about 70 percent of the offenses committed by the inmates. (See pp. 14 and 15.)

Classification

Through classification, an inmate's social, vocational, and educational needs are to be identified; his program participation plan established; his participation monitored; and if necessary, his plan revised. Of the 104 inmates GAO sampled, documentation of required initial classifications was missing from the files of 79 inmates (76 percent). (See p. 16.) Files for 58 inmates (62 percent) had no documentation to show that they had received required classification reviews every 6 (young adults) or 12 months (adults). (See pp. 17 and 18.)

Lorton officials said the missing classifications/reclassifications were either (1) not done because of oversight or workload requirements or (2) done, but documentation was lost, destroyed, or not prepared. (See p. 18.) In May 1987, Lorton officials began using standardized forms and an enhanced automated information system to insure documentation of all classifications and reclassifications. (See pp. 18 and 19.)

Program Participation

GAO reviewed inmates' participation records for the seven major program areas offered: academic, apprenticeship, industries, psychological,

substance abuse, vocational education, and work details. All but 2 of the 104 sampled inmates had been recommended through classification for at least one of the seven program areas during the 62-month period GAO reviewed. (See pp. 20 and 22.) Of the 102 inmates recommended for programs during the review period, the files for 2 contained no documentation to show that the inmates had participated in any programs. (See p. 23.)

The records showed that 100 inmates participated in a total of 423 programs. As of February 28, 1986, these inmates had completed 25 percent, were still attending about 32 percent, and had dropped out of about 40 percent of the programs. GAO could not determine the status of inmate participation for about 2 percent of the programs because of a lack of documentation. (See p. 24.) In July 1986, in an effort to reduce inmate idleness, the Department of Corrections made inmate participation in work programs mandatory unless inmates were participating in other programs. Also, the Department in June 1987 began requiring illiterate inmates to participate in recommended adult basic education programs. Department officials also want to expand and increase the number of work and other programs available to inmates, but staffing and budget constraints could limit efforts to expand programs. (See pp. 27 and 28.)

Recommendations

GAO is not making any recommendations because the Department has taken actions addressing the problems identified.

Agency Comments

GAO did not obtain official comments from the District of Columbia Government but did discuss the report with the Department of Corrections Director and other top Department officials who generally agreed with the facts presented.

Contents

Executive Summary		2
Chapter 1		8
Introduction	The Lorton Correctional Complex Objectives, Scope, and Methodology	8 11
Chapter 2		14
Many Lorton Inmates Were There Before and Have Committed Multiple Felonies	Prior Lorton Imprisonments District Felony Convictions	14 15
Chapter 3		16
Efforts Underway Should Strengthen Classification, Lorton's System for Recommending Needed Programs to Inmates	Classification Identifies Inmate Needs and Establishes the Treatment Plan Many Classifications of Lorton's Prisoners Not Documented— Some May Not Have Been Done Classification System Is Being Redesigned to Better Assure Timely and Consistent Reviews	16 17 18
Chapter 4		20
Making Some Programs Mandatory Should Increase Inmate Involvement in Recommended Programs	Overview of Programs Available to Lorton Inmates Most Inmates Were Recommended for and Participated in Programs Over Half of the Program Participation Was Completed or Ongoing at End of Review Period Much Incarceration Time Was Spent Not Enrolled in Programs Efforts Are Underway to Increase Inmate Program Participation and Reduce Idleness	20 22 24 26 27
Appendixes	Appendix I: Detailed Information on Lorton's Classification Process and Programs	30

Tables

Table 1.1: Lorton's Inmate Population and Capacity as of June 30, 1987	11
Table 2.1: Sampled Inmates With Prior Lorton Imprisonments	14
Table 2.2: District Felony Convictions of Sampled Inmates	15
Table 3.1: Sampled Inmates' Documented Initial Classifications	17
Table 3.2: Sampled Inmates With Documented Initial Classifications/ Reclassifications Every 6 or 12 Months	18
Table 4.1: Sampled Inmates With Program Recommendations and Documented Participation in a Program Area	23
Table 4.2: Sampled Inmates' Program Participation Status as of February 28, 1986	24
Table 4.3: Program Participation and Program Status of Sampled Inmates With Certain Known Needs	25
Table 4.4: Percent of Sampled Inmates' Incarceration Spent Enrolled in Academic, Apprenticeship, Industries, Vocational, and/or Work Detail Program Areas	27

Introduction

The District of Columbia's Department of Corrections is responsible for confining men and women sentenced by the courts to imprisonment, keeping them safe and secure, and preparing them to reenter society. The District's Correctional Complex at Lorton, Virginia, houses males sentenced by the District's Superior Court or the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. Other sentenced District offenders are housed in its jail in Washington, D.C., or in the federal prison system.¹

This report—prepared at the request of the Chairman, House Committee on the District of Columbia—describes (1) the Lorton complex and its inmate population, (2) Lorton's efforts for determining the types of programs that its inmates need to receive, and (3) participation in Lorton programs among a sample of Lorton inmates.

The Lorton Correctional Complex

At the time of our review the Lorton correctional complex consisted of eight separate facilities² on 3,000 acres of federally owned property in Lorton, Virginia. The facilities at Lorton are quasi-independent. On the one hand, each facility is autonomous since each has its own administration, information systems, and procedures for operating programs provided to inmates. On the other hand, laws, court orders, funding limits, security levels, and departmental policy place certain constraints on the programs or services offered to inmates, and the types and numbers of inmates housed.

Lorton operated under four court orders resulting from law suits filed by or on behalf of Lorton inmates.³ The orders limit the number of inmates that can be housed in certain facilities and/or require corrections officials to improve security, the environment, rehabilitative services, industrial programs, and medical services. For example, at two facilities a court order required that a full-time teacher and a clinical psychologist be hired for inmates who were separated from the general

¹On June 29, 1987, District officials reported having 230 sentenced male felons and 126 sentenced female felons in the jail and the Federal prison system reported housing 2,033 sentenced male offenders and 241 female sentenced offenders who had been convicted in District Superior Court. Sentenced offenders may be housed in non-Lorton facilities for various reasons including overcrowding, because they have relatives on Lorton's correctional staff, or because they are a threat to or being threatened by other Lorton inmates.

²The eight facilities were Maximum; Central; Occoquans I, II, and III; Minimum; and Youth Centers I and II. In September 1986, a ninth Lorton facility, referred to as Modular, was opened to house Lorton inmates.

³Twelve John Does v. D.C., Civ. No. 80-2136 (DCDC March 4, 1985); John Doe v. D.C., Civ. No. 79-1726 (DCDC March 23, 1984); Elroy Lewis v. Freeman, Civ. No. 82-1066 (DCDC December 9, 1983); and Ralph Clark v. D.C., Civ. No. 81-2072 (DCDC May 31, 1983).

population for disciplinary reasons. At another facility, a law library had to be provided.

Facilities Have Different Security Levels

Each of Lorton's facilities is categorized as either maximum, high, medium, or minimum security, based on the architectural and environmental constraints of the facility. The security level affects what programs can be offered to inmates. The Maximum facility is the only one with a maximum security categorization. Inmates of this facility are housed in cells because they are high escape risks, violent, or in need of protection not available in the open settings of the other institutions. All of the inmates in Maximum are felons.⁴ Psychological counseling, recreational activities, limited work details, and academic and vocational classes are provided to inmates housed in Maximum. About two-thirds of the population is not allowed to mingle with all of the other inmates at the facility. These inmates either cannot participate in programs or must have the programs brought into their cell blocks. For the inmates that can mingle with the other inmates, more opportunities to participate in programs exist. An inmate may move to a less secure facility if officials believe he is capable of living in a more open setting.

Three of Lorton's adult facilities (Central and Occoquans I and II) are high security and one facility (Occoquan III) is medium security. Most of their inmates are housed in dormitories. The inmates in these facilities have more freedom of movement than the inmates at Maximum and a wider variety of educational, vocational, and work programs are offered. A variety of inmates can be found at these facilities, ranging from recent escapees and inmates with serious mental or physical problems to misdemeanants⁵ or felons who pose few disciplinary problems to correctional staff. The Central facility houses the largest number of adult felons. Occoquans I and II house felons and misdemeanants. Felons housed at the Occoquan facilities generally have no more than 10 years of their sentence left to serve. Occoquan II also temporarily houses those inmates—both adult and young adult⁶—who are undergoing testing at the reception and diagnostic unit. Occoquan III has a lower security level

⁴A felony offense carries a sentence of more than 1 year.

⁵A misdemeanor offense entails a sentence of 1 year or less.

⁶Young adults are Lorton inmates who generally were (1) under the age of 22 at the time of conviction and (2) sentenced under The Youth Rehabilitation Amendment Act of 1985 (D.C. Code §24-801 et seq.) or its predecessor, the now repealed Federal Youth Corrections Act (formerly at 18 U.S.C. 5005-5026).

and houses an older, more stable population that is within 5 years of parole eligibility⁷ or release.

The Minimum facility is intended to help transition inmates back to the community. Inmates are within 2 years of parole eligibility or release and may participate in work training and education furlough programs in which inmates are transported daily to the community to attend college or go to work. In addition, inmates may participate in academic, vocational, and psychological programs, and work details.

Lorton's Youth Center I is a high security and Youth Center II is a medium security facility. They house young adults. These inmates have a limited criminal history and are required by law to be provided with appropriate rehabilitation programs. Thus, academic and vocational classes are offered as well as work details and psychological counseling. The inmates housed at Youth Center I generally are new arrivals, are considered escape risks, have serious behavior problems, have consecutive adult sentences or detainers from other jurisdictions, or have a need to be segregated from the general population. Inmates at Youth Center II are lower security risks and generally cause fewer disciplinary problems.

Lorton Capacities and Population

The number of inmates housed in Lorton's facilities is to be limited based on either (1) the capacity of the facility determined by its architectural design or (2) court-ordered capacities. The District can be fined if facilities exceed their court-ordered capacity unless extenuating circumstances can be presented to the court. As of June 30, 1987, the inmate capacities for three (Maximum, Central, and Youth Center I) of Lorton's facilities were limited by court orders. Three additional facilities (Occoquans I, II, and III) had court-ordered capacities took effect on July 31, 1987. Consequently, Minimum, Youth Center II, and Modular⁸ will be the only Lorton facilities whose capacities are not limited by a court order.

As table 1.1 shows, the combined June 30, 1987, population for all Lorton facilities exceeded the total capacity by 24 percent and six of the nine facilities were over capacity.

⁷Parole is the conditional return of an institutionalized offender to the community before completion of the term of imprisonment that was originally imposed.

⁸This facility opened 9 months after our sample was selected, and is not discussed elsewhere in this report.

Table 1.1: Lorton's Inmate Population and Capacity as of June 30, 1987

Facility	Capacity	Population	Percent over capacity
Maximum	536 ^a	535	•
Central	1,102 ^b	1,101 ^c	•
Occoquan I	436 ^d	676	55
Occoquan II	550 ^d	799	45
Occoquan III	380 ^d	481	27
Minimum	400 ^d	621	55
Youth Center I	406 ^a	406	•
Youth Center II	250 ^d	309	24
Modular	400 ^d	594	49
Total	4,460	5,522^c	24

^aThese capacities are court-ordered.

^bThis facility has a court-ordered capacity of 1,125 but on June 30, 1987, one dormitory was temporarily closed for renovation. During this renovation Lorton officials set the capacity at 1,102.

^cThis does not include 59 inmates who were at Central but who do not count against the court-ordered capacity because, according to Department of Corrections officials, the court order excludes inmates in the facility's infirmary, control unit, or inmates temporarily housed elsewhere (e.g., jail, hospital).

^dThese capacities are determined by the facilities architectural design. Effective July 31, 1987, Occoquans I, II, and III had court-ordered capacities of 433, 485, and 363, respectively.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

At the request of the Chairman, House Committee on the District of Columbia, we reviewed the criminal histories of a sample of Lorton inmates and their involvement with seven key correctional program areas: academic, apprenticeship, industries, psychological, substance abuse, vocational education, and work details. (See appendix for a description of these programs.) We did not review the recreation and religious program areas because, according to Department of Corrections officials, they are not typically part of the inmates' formally recommended program and detailed participation records are not usually maintained. We did not review the work training furlough program area because it is available to only a small number of inmates for a short time before they are released. Principally, our objectives were to determine the extent to which the Lorton inmates were (1) convicted previously of a felony offense in the District of Columbia and confined at Lorton, (2) reviewed for program needs through a process referred to as classification, and (3) recommended for and participated in the seven program areas.

Our audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. The views of responsible officials were sought

during the course of our work and are incorporated in the report where appropriate. In accordance with the Chairman's wishes, we did not request that the District Government review and comment officially on a draft of this report. We did, however, discuss the overall results of our work with the Director and other top Department of Corrections officials who generally agreed with the facts in the report.

Work was performed from June 1985 to December 1986. We conducted our work primarily at the headquarters of the Department of Corrections in Washington, D.C., and the correctional facilities located in Lorton, Virginia. At these locations, we interviewed officials and reviewed various records and reports on prison operations; the inmate population; and program operations. A structured data collection instrument was used to collect inmate case file information in a systematic and standardized fashion.

Program Participation and Prior Convictions

To determine whether inmates were classified as required by the Department of Corrections, and whether the inmates participated in the programs for which they were recommended by the classification process, we selected a random sample of 104 Lorton inmates. This random sample was taken from the 4,273 inmates who resided in Lorton on January 15, 1986. This sample represented both young adults and adults and included inmates from the eight correctional facilities which existed at Lorton at the time of our review. We randomly selected these cases to avoid any bias in our sample.⁹

Whenever an inmate was classified and participated in recommended programs, the facilities' policies required that documentation be prepared. We reviewed the inmates' case files and other available records on the inmates for the period January 1, 1981, through February 28, 1986 (the date we started reviewing the files). We selected a 62-month time frame to provide sufficient time for the inmates to have been involved in programs.

We reviewed inmates' files and the individual program records to obtain documentation of any form that inmates received required classifications and were recommended for and participated in programs. Whenever we could find no such documentation, we discussed the particular

⁹The reader should note the results of this report are representative of our sample and are not projections to the total universe.

case with Lorton officials and gave them an opportunity to present evidence that the classification had been done or the inmate had participated in recommended academic, apprenticeship, industries, psychological, vocational, and/or work detail programs. For all cases of missing classifications except one, the officials could not say that the classifications had been given. The officials could not tell us and we could not determine which of the following had actually occurred: (1) the inmate was classified but the required documentation was either not prepared or had been destroyed or lost or (2) the inmate did not receive the required classification. They also could not provide specific explanations for about two-thirds of the cases where there was no evidence showing participation in recommended programs. For the other cases, they provided specific reasons for the nonparticipation. We did not follow up on the substance abuse program area because the responsible official told us that there was no documentation on participation other than what he had already provided us.

To determine the number of inmates in Lorton who had previously been convicted in the District and confined at Lorton, we used the same sample of 104 inmates reviewed for classification and program participation. We reviewed the commitment and release orders in the inmates' prison files.

Many Lorton Inmates Were There Before and Had Committed Multiple Felonies

Nearly 7 of every 10 adult inmates and about 1 of every 10 young adult inmates included in our sample had previously been convicted of a felony offense in the District of Columbia and incarcerated at one of the Lorton facilities.¹ Including all District convictions for which they had or had not been incarcerated at Lorton, drug offenses, robbery, and other theft-type offenses accounted for about 70 percent of all District felony crimes for which the inmates had been convicted.

Prior Lorton Imprisonments

A total of 44 of the 104 inmates reviewed (42 percent) had been previously convicted in the District and incarcerated in Lorton. The 104 inmates we reviewed consisted of 57 adults and 47 young adults. As table 2.1 shows, 68 percent of the adults and 11 percent of the young adults were previously convicted in the District and incarcerated at Lorton. Moreover, about a third of the adults had been previously incarcerated more than once. None of the young adults had more than 1 prior incarceration.

Table 2.1: Sampled Inmates With Prior Lorton Imprisonments

Number of prior imprisonments	Adults reviewed: 57		Young adults reviewed: 47		Total reviewed: 104	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
One	21	37	5	11	26	25
Two	8	14	•	•	8	8
Three	6	11	•	•	6	6
Four	4	7	•	•	4	4
More than four	•	•	•	•	•	•
Total	39	68^a	5	11	44	42^a

^aDoes not add due to rounding.

¹The analysis is restricted to felony convictions that resulted in incarcerations at Lorton and thus excludes (1) District convictions with no incarcerations or with incarcerations at the District's jail, or state and federal facilities; and (2) convictions and incarcerations in other jurisdictions.

District Felony Convictions

Table 2.2 shows the number and types of District felonies for which the 104 inmates we sampled were convicted.

Table 2.2: District Felony Convictions of Sampled Inmates

Offense type	Adults (57)		Young adults (47)		Total (104)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Robbery	70	24	32	36	102	27
Burglary or unlawful entry	50	17	12	14	62	17
Drug possession or sale	39	14	10	11	49	13
Larceny, theft, stolen property	34	12	13	15	47	13
Weapons	29	10	4	5	33	9
Assault	20	7	7	8	27	7
Homicide	9	3	3	3	12	3
Forgery or counterfeiting	10	3	•	•	10	3
Rape and other sex offenses	7	2	3	3	10	3
Other ^a	19	7	4	5	23	6
Total	287	99^b	88	100	375	101^b

^aPrimarily, includes violation of bond, destruction of property, and escapes.

^bDoes not add to 100 percent because of rounding.

The adult inmates, on average, were 35 years of age and had been convicted of about five District felony offenses each. The young adults, on average, were 23 years of age and had nearly two District felony convictions each.

Efforts Underway Should Strengthen Classification, Lorton's System for Recommending Needed Programs to Inmates

Classification guides an inmate throughout his incarceration. Through this process the inmate's social, vocational, and educational needs are identified and his housing and custody level determined; his program participation plan established; and his participation monitored. Inmates are to be classified upon entering a Lorton facility and upon transferring from one Lorton facility to another. They are to be reclassified at least semiannually (young adults) and annually (adults) so that their progress and needs can be reassessed.

Of the 104 inmates we sampled, more than three-fourths (76 percent) had no documentation to show that all required initial classifications were done. In addition, more than half (62 percent) of the 93 inmates, for whom we had dated initial classifications and/or reclassifications, had no documentation to show that they had received some type of review at least once every 6 or 12 months as required. As a result, neither we nor Lorton officials know whether the required classifications and reclassifications were performed. Department of Corrections and Lorton management officials began implementing a new classification system in May 1987. If properly implemented, this system should improve the classification process and provide management information on the extent to which classification policies are being followed.

Classification Identifies Inmate Needs and Establishes the Treatment Plan

Each Lorton inmate must periodically be evaluated to determine his program needs and establish a plan for fulfilling those needs. The process, called classification, uses various techniques, such as analysis of an inmate's criminal history, inmate interviews, and in some cases, aptitude and proficiency tests, to identify areas where an inmate needs to develop. The overall goals of classification are to determine the inmates' housing and custody levels, identify areas needing improvements, and schedule programs and activities for the inmates that will keep them busy during their incarceration and better prepare them for life in society when their prison terms end.

The initial classification was to be conducted at each Lorton facility when the inmate (1) first entered the facility or (2) transferred from one facility to another. In addition, an inmate was to be reclassified at least annually (for adults) and semiannually (for young adults) so that the inmate's progress could be reviewed and changes made to his program plan as needed. Reclassifications could also be done sooner if, for example, an inmate was eligible for parole. Additional details on the classification process are included in the appendix.

Many Classifications of Lorton's Prisoners Not Documented—Some May Not Have Been Done

For the period we reviewed, Lorton did not have standard classification documentation requirements for all of the facilities to follow. However, each facility required its caseworkers to record the inmate's recommended program plan and the date on which the recommendations were formally acted upon. Lorton had not established a system for identifying when inmates should be reclassified. Therefore, caseworkers relied on techniques like keeping pertinent dates on a note card or waiting to be informed through a memorandum sent by the chief caseworker.

We reviewed the files for the 104 inmates we randomly selected to determine if they received all required classifications. We determined that our sample of inmates should have received 337 initial classifications during the 62-month period we reviewed because of their initial confinement to Lorton or transfers among Lorton facilities. As shown in table 3.1, documentation was available to show that 152 (45 percent) of the required initial classifications were performed. However, a total of 79 inmates (76 percent) were missing documentation for all (12 inmates) or some (67 inmates) of their required initial classifications.

Table 3.1: Sampled Inmates' Documented Initial Classifications

Documented	Number and (percent) of inmates		Initial classifications		Percent documented
			Required	Documented	
All	25	(24)	47	47	100
Some	67	(64)	256	105	41
None	12	(12)	34	•	•
Total	104	(100)	337	152	45

Of the 152 documented initial classifications, 136 were dated. These dates showed that 66 percent were given within the required time¹ and 95 percent were within 30 days of the requirement.

Extent Inmates Had Some Type of Documented Classification Every 6 or 12 Months

Lorton's policy requires that, at a minimum, an inmate be reclassified every 6 months if he is a young adult and every year if he is an adult. We reviewed the 93 inmate files in our sample for which we had dated initial classifications and/or reclassifications to determine if they went more than 6 or 12 months without being given any type of classification. As shown in table 3.2, documentation existed to show that 35 (38 percent) of the 93 inmates were given an initial classification or reclassification at least every 6 or 12 months as required.

¹The required time varied among facilities from 1 to 10 working days.

Table 3.2: Sampled Inmates With Documented Initial Classifications/Reclassifications Every 6 or 12 Months

Review documented	Inmates	
	Number	Percent
Yes	35	38
No	58	62
Total	93	100

Only one inmate did not have a documented classification during the period we reviewed. However, his caseworker recalled participating in the inmate's classifications but did not have substantiating documentation.

When we could not find documentation showing that required initial classifications and reclassifications had been done, we had Lorton officials confirm that we had reviewed all available files on the inmates. We then interviewed each inmate's caseworker or his/her supervisor about the missing classifications. In one case the caseworker said the inmate had been classified, but he had no documentation that it had been done. In all other cases, the caseworkers or supervisors did not know whether: (1) the classification was done but not documented or the documentation lost or destroyed or (2) the classification was not done. They said some classifications may not have been performed because of administrative oversight or a decision not to conduct classifications due to a lack of interest on the part of inmates. Because of the lack of documentation, neither we nor Lorton officials know whether the classifications were conducted in accordance with Lorton policies.

Classification System Is Being Redesigned to Better Assure Timely and Consistent Reviews

The classification system used at Lorton is being redesigned to bring consistency into the system, streamline the initial classification process, insure documentation of classification recommendations, and provide an information system which will give management the capability to monitor classification actions and program recommendations. According to Department of Corrections officials, the impetus for the project, which began in 1984, was the realization that the classification system lacked consistency, objectivity, and control because each facility had great latitude in operating its own classification system and because criteria for making decisions on an inmate's custody level and program plan were not specified in policy. To correct the problems, the project staff reviewed the processes used at Lorton and standards developed by other correctional agencies including the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The Department began implementing the new system in May 1987.

Chapter 3
Efforts Underway Should Strengthen
Classification, Lorton's System for
Recommending Needed Programs to Inmates

To correct the problem of nonexistent criteria for assigning custody levels, rating factors such as age, marital status, current and past offenses, escape history, alcohol/drug history, and institutional adjustment have been established for use Lorton-wide.

To provide more consistency in identifying an inmate's program needs, every inmate will go through one facility for their initial classification when they first arrive at Lorton, and the inmates will be rated on a need scale (1 to 5) for each service provided at Lorton. The rater will take into consideration mental and physical health, psychological status, substance abuse history, vocational skills, educational level, and social skills. After the inmate's major program needs and custody level have been identified, he will be assigned to the appropriate facility. The caseworker at that facility will use the information from the initial classification to assign the inmate to programs where his needs are greatest unless the program recommended is unavailable. Inmates will continue to be reclassified at least annually (adults) or semiannually (young adults).

To insure appropriate documentation, standard classification forms will be used Lorton-wide. The data on the forms will be updated as the inmate is transferred or reclassified and entered into an automated information system. The information system will be used for case management and for long range program and facility planning. Previously, the Department of Corrections did not have an overall information system to show compliance with classification requirements, inmate custody level and program needs, program recommendations, and the inmates' progress in achieving recommended programs. To standardize the records caseworkers are to keep, working folder requirements have been established. Classification supervisory personnel are to review these records at least quarterly to assure that initial classifications and reclassifications are fully documented.

Making Some Programs Mandatory Should Increase Inmate Involvement in Recommended Programs

The academic, apprenticeship, vocational, work detail, industries, psychological, and substance abuse program areas are a major part of Lorton's efforts to achieve its objectives of keeping inmates gainfully busy; developing or improving their work habits, skills, and literacy; and enhancing their potential for a law-abiding life after prison. Of the 104 inmates we sampled, 100 participated in at least one of these program areas during the 62-month period we reviewed. At the end of that period, these inmates had completed or were still involved in about 57 percent of the programs in which they had participated. Four percent of the inmates were enrolled in the academic, apprenticeship, vocational, and/or work programs every day they were incarcerated during our review period; 46 percent were enrolled for half or less of their incarceration time.

Lorton officials gave various reasons why inmates did not participate in or complete programs. Principally, they noted that program participation had not been mandatory and that the major incentives for promoting program participation and good behavior, i.e., parole, good time (sentence reduction) credits, and monetary payments had limitations. Department of Corrections officials, however, in July 1986, implemented a policy requiring all able-bodied inmates to work. Inmates will not be required to work if they are participating full time in academic or vocational programs. Department officials also plan to require all illiterate inmates to participate in the adult basic education program. Also, the District of Columbia City Council in April 1987 enacted legislation to enhance the use of good time credits to encourage program participation and good behavior.

Overview of Programs Available to Lorton Inmates

As of June 30, 1986, Lorton had 10 different program areas available to its inmates: academic, apprenticeship, industries, psychological, recreation, religious, substance abuse, vocational, work details, and work training furloughs. Within each of these program areas, different programs were offered. For example, the academic program area included programs, such as special education, adult basic education, and college level courses. In addition, some programs were designed for the inmate to take and complete (e.g., special education) whereas others were designed for inmate involvement throughout his incarceration (e.g., work details). Lorton programs are to achieve three basic objectives: to

Chapter 4
Making Some Programs Mandatory Should
Increase Inmate Involvement in
Recommended Programs

teach job skills and good work habits and attitudes; to keep inmates productively busy; and to change the behavior that caused the incarceration.¹

The programs an inmate decided to participate in were ultimately his decision because, for the period we reviewed, participation was not mandatory. His decision could be affected by the availability of a program area at the facility in which he was housed. Not all program areas were offered at all facilities and, for the most part, the inmate could participate in only those program areas offered within the confines of his institution. To participate in a program area that was unavailable, the inmate would have to be transferred. Three (apprenticeship, industries, and work training furlough) of the 10 program areas were unavailable Lorton-wide and the components of another (vocational) varied by facility. The apprenticeship and industries program areas were offered only to inmates residing at Central. The work training furlough program was only offered at Minimum and involved inmates who were furloughed during the day to work in the private sector. The apprenticeship program area was offered only at Central because, according to the Vocational Supervisor, the typical sentence and custody level of Central's inmates match those needed to participate in and complete the program and only this facility had the space to meet the apprenticeship program space requirements. The industries program area had not been expanded to other facilities because, according to Lorton officials, space is not available. Also, additional demand for existing products or demand for new products would have to be found before expansion could occur. In the vocational program area, the number of programs offered at the facilities varied and no one program was offered at all facilities.

The other program areas were all available Lorton-wide but may have operated differently. For example, the principals' requirement at three academic schools was that inmates must enroll in a minimum of three courses, while at another school the principal required that inmates enroll in only one course. The different enrollment requirements were due basically to different philosophies: some principals believed that enrolling and participating in just one course was an achievement.

¹Many studies have been done to determine whether a link exists between program participation and recidivism. Although some studies have indicated a relationship, overall, the research to date does not provide a firm basis for saying that if an inmate participates in programs while incarcerated, he/she will not return to a life of crime upon release.

Recognizing the importance of inmate programs, Congress appropriated about \$41 million to the District in fiscal years 1984 through 1986 primarily to expand Lorton's educational and vocational programs. At the request of the Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on the District of Columbia, Committee on Appropriations, we are reviewing the District's use of these funds to determine if they were spent in accordance with congressional intent.

The appendix provides a more detailed description of the program areas available to Lorton inmates.

Most Inmates Were Recommended for and Participated in Programs

We focused on 7 of the 10 program areas at Lorton to examine participation rates among the 104 inmates we sampled. We did not review the recreation and religious program areas because, according to Department of Corrections officials, they are not typically part of the inmates' formally recommended program and detailed participation records are not usually maintained. We did not review the work training furlough program area because it is available to only a small number of inmates for a short time before they are released.

Of the 104 inmates sampled, all but 2 were recommended at least once for one or more of the seven program areas during the 62-month period we reviewed. One of the two inmates had only been at Lorton for 2 weeks. The other had been there for 14 months, and his caseworker recalled recommending him for academic programs but did not have anything documenting the recommendation; the caseworker also said the inmate consistently refused to participate.

The 102 inmates were recommended, on average, for about four of the seven program areas. Consistent with their availability at all Lorton facilities, the academic, psychological, vocational, substance abuse, and work detail program areas were most often recommended. The industries and apprenticeship program areas, which were available only at Central, were the least recommended. Table 4.1 shows the number of inmates who were recommended for the seven program areas and the number for whom we found evidence of some degree of participation.

Chapter 4
Making Some Programs Mandatory Should
Increase Inmate Involvement in
Recommended Programs

Table 4.1: Sampled Inmates With Program Recommendations and Documented Participation in a Program Area

Program area	Number of inmates recommended^a	Number of inmates with participation documented	Participation percent
Academic	93	66	71
Apprenticeship	3	3	100
Industries	15	13	87
Psychological	84	64	76
Substance abuse	83	37	45
Vocational	69	44	64
Work detail	95	75	79
Total^b	442	302	68

^aWe counted inmates with participation but no documented recommendations as having received a recommendation because to participate in a program requires at least the approval of the inmate's caseworker.

^bThe totals represent the number of program areas recommended for or participated in by all 104 sampled inmates.

Of the 102 inmates who were recommended, we found evidence that 100 (98 percent) participated to some degree in one or more of the recommended program areas at least once during the 62-month period. As table 4.1 shows, the documented participation rate for the seven program areas we reviewed was 68 percent overall and ranged from 45 to 100 percent.

Lorton management and Department of Corrections officials said that the gap between program recommendation and participation could be attributable to the inmates not participating or inmates participating but the participation not being documented or the documentation lost. They added that a principal reason for nonparticipation in all recommended program areas is that the Department had not required inmates to participate. Other reasons given for nonparticipation included scheduling conflicts and failure to meet program qualifying criteria.

A responsible substance abuse official told us that the large gap in the substance abuse program area was the result of having too few staff to treat, at any one time, all inmates who were recommended for treatment. He said that inmates within 6 to 18 months of release are given priority for participation in the program.

**Over Half of the
 Program Participation
 Was Completed or
 Ongoing at End of
 Review Period**

Of the 100 sampled inmates who participated in at least one program during the 62-month period we reviewed, 62 had completed one or more programs and 76 were participating in programs as of February 28, 1986. The inmates had completed 107 (25 percent) or were participating in 137 programs (32 percent). Inmates dropped from 171 programs (40 percent), and because of a lack of documentation, we could not determine the status for 8 (2 percent) of the programs.

Inmates dropped programs for a variety of reasons. Fifty-six programs (about 33 percent) were dropped by inmates being transferred from a facility or program, another 37 programs (about 22 percent) were dropped for poor performance or behavior, and 18 programs (about 10 percent) were dropped for other reasons. We could not determine why 60 (about 35 percent) of the 171 dropped programs were dropped.

Table 4.2 shows the extent to which the 100 inmates had, as of February 28, 1986, completed, dropped, or were still involved in one or more programs within each of the seven program areas they had participated in during the 62-month period we reviewed. For inmates who participated in the same program more than once, we only recorded the results of the inmates' last participation.

**Table 4.2: Sampled Inmates' Program^a
 Participation Status as of February 28,
 1986**

Program area	Number of programs ^b				Total
	Completed	Ongoing	Dropped	Unknown	
Academic	16	29	45	2	92
Apprenticeship	•	3	•	•	3
Industries	c	6	10	•	16
Psychological	57	15	19	2	93
Substance abuse	29	5	8	1	43
Vocational	5	31	23	•	59
Work Detail	c	48	66	3	117
Total	107	137	171	8	423

^aThe programs include the specific apprenticeship, industries, vocational, and work detail programs in which the inmates participated. For the academic area we included the special education, adult basic education, general education development, pre and post general education development, and the college programs; we did give two inmates credit for participating in the academic program area who had participated in specific classes rather than the full range of classes within a program. The psychological program area included individual and group therapy, testing, medical screening, and other activities such as referrals for determining if psychological treatment was needed. Substance abuse included alcohol and drug counseling and seminar programs.

^bThe total programs shown for these program areas are more than the documented participation shown for the program areas (except apprenticeship) in table 4.1 because whereas table 4.1 just counts participation in a program area, this table counts participation in each program within a program area.

^cThese programs are continuous and do not have completions.

Chapter 4
Making Some Programs Mandatory Should
Increase Inmate Involvement in
Recommended Programs

Completions in different programs represent different degrees of inmate involvement. For example, completing a vocational or apprenticeship program typically involves hundreds of hours whereas diagnostic testing, one of the psychological programs, can be completed in two days.

To provide more specific information on program participation, we determined, as shown in table 4.3, if inmates with certain known needs were involved with and completed appropriate programs.

Table 4.3: Program Participation and Program Status of Sampled Inmates With Certain Known Needs

Problem area	Number with Problem^a	Number (percent) recommended for program that addressed problem	Number (percent) participated in program	Program status (as of Feb. 28, 1986)
Tested below literacy (sixth grade) level	44	44 (100)	40 (91)	Ongoing: 13 Completed: 12 ^b Dropped: 15
No high school diploma	88	82 (93)	61 (74)	Ongoing: 26 Completed: 7 Dropped: 27 Unknown: 1
No employment record or sporadic work	41	37 (90)	33 (89)	Ongoing: 25 Dropped: 7 Unknown: 1
Reported drug/alcohol use	96	78 (81)	32 (41)	Ongoing: 5 Completed: 20 Dropped: 6 Unknown: 1

^aInformation on the problem was available for all 104 inmates in our sample except for literacy where only 59 of the sample had documentation on literacy level.

^bEight of these 12 inmates had tested below literacy and had no record of completing the literacy program. They had, however, been in classes above the literacy level which indicates that at some time Lorton's educational staff had determined these inmates were literate.

As table 4.3 shows, most inmates with an identified problem area were recommended for programs to address the problem. A Department of Corrections official said that any time such problems are identified and an appropriate recommendation is not made, it could be due to oversight or because an alternative program was scheduled; for example, an older inmate, who was not interested in school, may be recommended for another program. In addition, except for the drug/alcohol use program area, most inmates had participated or were participating in programs to address their identified problem. A Department of Corrections official said that inmates may not participate in programs designed to correct

the problem for the same reasons—programs not mandatory, scheduling conflicts, etc.—that they do not participate in other programs.

Much Incarceration Time Was Spent Not Enrolled in Programs

As noted earlier, a principal purpose of Lorton programs is to prevent inmate idle time. That is consistent with national correctional standards² which require that inmates be involved in full-time work or program assignments. Inmate idleness has been previously reported as a problem area at Lorton. A December 16, 1983, Federal Bureau of Prisons' report said that "inmate idleness abounds."³

To get an indication of inmate idleness during the 62-month period we reviewed, we analyzed the program enrollments for five of the seven program areas we reviewed⁴ for the 97 inmates in our sample for which information was available. We did not check inmates' attendance during their enrollment because this information was usually not contained in the files. Furthermore, the inmates' records did not always provide exact or complete data concerning when they were enrolled in programs. Therefore, whenever there was a doubt, we gave them credit for being enrolled. For each inmate, we computed the actual number of days he was incarcerated, including weekends. In computing the number of days inmates were enrolled in any program, we also counted weekends occurring during the program enrollment period(s). We also assumed that all programs filled the inmates' entire day, although some programs, such as typing, would only require part-time involvement by the inmates.

As shown in table 4.4, 10 percent of the inmates never enrolled in any of the five program areas and 4 percent spent all of their incarceration days enrolled in one or more of the five program areas. About 46 percent of the inmates spent half or less of their incarceration enrolled in one or more of the five program areas. The 97 inmates were incarcerated a median of about 26 months during our 62-month review period and spent, on average, 16.6 (64 percent) of those months enrolled in one or more of the five program areas.

²Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, January 1981, American Correctional Association (p. 107).

³Review of District of Columbia Prison Operations at Lorton, Virginia.

⁴We did not include programs in the psychological and substance abuse program areas because compared to the other program areas, they generally consume a small amount of time. The psychological therapy program, which is the most time consuming psychological program, requires just one hour a week. The most common substance abuse program typically requires about 7 hours a week for 8 weeks.

Chapter 4
Making Some Programs Mandatory Should
Increase Inmate Involvement in
Recommended Programs

Table 4.4: Percent of Sampled Inmates' Incarceration Spent Enrolled in Academic, Apprenticeship, Industries, Vocational, and/or Work Detail Program Areas

Percent of time enrolled	Inmates	
	Number	Percent
0	10	10
1-10	2	2
11-20	6	6
21-30	6	6
31-40	10	10
41-50	12	12
51-60	9	9
61-70	8	8
71-80	7	7
81-90	5	5
91-99	18	19
100	4	4
Total	97	98^a

^aDoes not equal 100 percent because of rounding.

Efforts Are Underway to Increase Inmate Program Participation and Reduce Idleness

The Department of Corrections has taken action to reduce inmate idleness and to increase the use of inmate labor in maintaining prison facilities. Lorton implemented, in July 1986, a policy requiring all able-bodied inmates to work unless they are participating full time in academic and vocational programs. In addition, on June 1, 1987, Department of Corrections officials implemented a policy requiring that inmates who test below literacy participate in the adult basic education program.

A Department of Corrections official said that they were attempting to increase the number of work detail programs in an effort to keep inmates busy. He said they are also attempting to expand existing non-work programs and add new programs, although staffing and budget limitations would restrict the number of programs that can be offered.

Department of Corrections officials also noted that monetary payments, parole, and good time credits—the major incentives for promoting program participation and good behavior—have limitations. Concerning monetary incentives, payments are limited to work programs and average about \$.34 to \$.94 per hour for industries and \$6.50 to \$21 per month for work details. We were told that these programs usually are filled. Parole is a limited incentive, according to Lorton officials, because some inmates are not eligible for parole or are years away from eligibility. Adult offenders are not eligible for parole until they have served a third of their sentence. Young adults can be paroled at the discretion of

Chapter 4
Making Some Programs Mandatory Should
Increase Inmate Involvement in
Recommended Programs

the District's parole board. The parole board considers program participation and inmate behavior along with various factors such as the nature and severity of the offense in making parole decisions. However, program participation was not mandatory for parole. For example, one of our sampled inmates was paroled after serving 18 months, during which time, according to his caseworker, he consistently refused to participate in any programs.

Good time credits are days earned by the inmate for good behavior or for satisfactory performance in an industries program. The days earned are used to reduce the inmate's maximum sentence. According to Corrections officials, these credits generally do not affect an inmate's release date because inmates' are typically released before the credit has an effect. The Parole Board, however, considers the amount of good time earned in assessing the inmate's institutional behavior, one of the factors they use in making parole decisions.

The District of Columbia City Council, concerned about inmate behavior and participation in programs, enacted the Good Time Credits Act of 1986 (D.C. Law 6-218, April 11, 1987). That law strengthens the good time incentive by allowing good time credits to be deducted from an inmate's minimum sentence and by also allowing credit for participation in education programs.

Detailed Information on Lorton's Classification Process and Programs

The Classification Process

Our review of available policy guidance and discussions with prison officials revealed that the classification process used at Lorton during our review was essentially the same, regardless of whether the inmate was newly incarcerated or simply transferring from one Lorton facility to another. Generally, when an inmate arrived at a Lorton facility, he was to be interviewed by a caseworker. The purpose of the interview was to familiarize the inmate with the rules and regulations of Lorton and the facility and to give him a brief description of the programs available at the institution. General paperwork was also signed by the inmate stating that he had no relatives in law enforcement and had no known enemies at the prison, and thus could live in the general population. If the resident did not sign the paperwork because he refused, had an enemy in the prison, or had a relative in law enforcement, he would either be transferred to another Lorton facility or placed in protective custody.

The caseworker reviewed the inmate's institutional file so that he/she could gain more information on the inmate. Because of the high rate of recidivism as indicated in chapter 2, or the fact that the inmate may have been housed in other Lorton facilities, the caseworker could have a great deal of information on hand. Based on the interview, the file review, and program availability, the caseworker would set up a program plan for the inmate, recommending that an inmate attend one or any combination of programs. The caseworker would present the plan at a meeting with the classification committee. The inmate also would attend the meeting.

While the membership of the classification committee might differ somewhat for each of Lorton's facilities, the core members of the committee did not vary across Lorton. At a minimum, the members of the committee were the Supervisory Classification and Parole Officer (the head of the caseworkers), a representative from the academic and vocational program areas, a psychologist, and a correctional officer. After the plan was presented, the committee would approve the plan with or without change. The plan would then be reviewed by the Assistant Administrator of the facility. Committee decisions had to be approved by the facility's Administrator. When an inmate was given his program plan, the caseworker expected all recommendations to be carried out simultaneously. If an inmate had a problem with his plan, he could appeal it in

Appendix I
Detailed Information on Lorton's
Classification Process and Programs

writing to the Classification Appeals Committee.¹ If program conflicts arose that prevented an inmate from participating in a recommended program, the inmate was to notify his caseworker of this conflict so that a new schedule could be arranged.

Depending in which facility the inmate was housed, the initial classification should have been done within 24 hours of his arrival or it may not have been required for 10 working days. There was no Lorton-wide policy on when the initial classification should be done, only that one occur for each inmate every time he entered a Lorton facility.

An inmate was to be reclassified periodically. At a minimum, he was to be reviewed by his caseworker every 6 months if he was a young adult or every 12 months if he was an adult. He was to be reviewed sooner if he was eligible for parole or transfer to a halfway house or another facility, if his program plan had changed (for example, he had completed a program and needed to be scheduled for something else), if his custody level needed to be increased or decreased, if he was to be transferred to a facility with a different security level, or if he was kept in a cell for disciplinary reasons. At the reclassification, the caseworker would make any necessary changes to the initial recommendations and would present all of them to the committee for approval. The caseworker was to base his/her changes on progress reports received on the inmate, oral reports given by instructors or correctional officers, and input from the inmate.

Some inmates had their program needs assessed before arriving at their facility. These plans were developed by the Reception and Diagnostic Unit, which is located in Occoquan II. The unit tested convicted young adults at the request of the court and adults housed in or slated for transfer to Central.² The purpose of the tests for young adults was to give the judge a total picture of the young adult so that he/she could decide if the offender could benefit from rehabilitation programs and should be sentenced under the rehabilitation-oriented youth sentencing procedures. The evaluation consisted of a battery of standardized tests designed to assess intelligence, motor skills, and psychological characteristics and interviews with the inmate about his social and criminal

¹Committee members included the Assistant Administrator, the senior correctional officer, and the Supervisory Classification and Parole Officer. The resident could be present at the appeals hearings. The decision was to be given to the inmate within 5 days.

²According to a 1982 court order, all Lorton adults housed at Central after July 1982 were to receive an evaluation from the diagnostic unit.

history. A narrative report was then written (listing the tests taken and their results and recommending a treatment program and housing assignment) and inserted into an inmate's institutional file. It was not mandatory for the receiving institutions to use the recommendations made by the diagnostic unit when classifying an individual. Some institutions did, however, use all or part of the evaluation during the initial classification, recognizing that the evaluation is a source of additional information. In May 1987, Lorton began implementing a new classification policy which, among other things, required that all adults and young adults committed to Lorton receive an initial classification at the Occoquan II Research and Diagnostic Unit.

Lorton Inmate Program Areas

All Lorton facilities offered program areas aimed at developing or improving work habits, skills, and literacy; keeping the inmates gainfully busy; and changing the behavior that caused the incarceration. However, not all program areas were available at every facility. As discussed in chapter 4, Lorton had 10 program areas, and various programs were offered within each of these areas. A Department of Corrections official said Department level management generally determined what programs will be offered at what facilities, handled the personnel matters, and set the program requirements. The facilities' administrators controlled the flow of inmates into the programs through the classification process and had some freedom to tailor each program area so that it conformed to the needs of the inmates, the security guidelines, the space available, and the facility's operating budget. The one exception was the substance abuse program area. This program area, which was a joint effort between the Department of Corrections and the District's Department of Human Services, was offered Lorton-wide and its operations were not supposed to differ. A description of each of Lorton's 10 program areas as of June 30, 1986, follows.

Academic Program Area

Lorton offered various programs in its academic program area to improve the education of its inmates. All facilities offered, at a minimum, classes in math, english, and reading at a variety of reading levels. Inmates referred to an academic program were given a standardized test to determine the level in which they would be placed. Although minor variations existed among facilities, generally, inmates who tested at the sixth grade and below reading level were to be placed in adult basic education, which taught basic skills; inmates who tested at the seventh

Appendix I
Detailed Information on Lorton's
Classification Process and Programs

through eighth grade reading levels were to be placed in pregeneral education development classes, which taught more advanced skills and prepared them for the next level; and inmates who tested at the ninth grade reading level were placed at the next higher level, which prepared them to pass an exam and to receive a general education development certificate that is the equivalent of a high school diploma. In Central and the Youth Centers, special education classes were offered for educationally or socially handicapped inmates who were not more than 21 years of age. Academic programs were typically designed to fill at least half of the inmates' day. As of June 30, 1986, the department reported 1,281 inmates (about 28 percent of all Lorton's inmates) were enrolled in an academic program.

All institutions except Maximum and Minimum offered a college program through the University of the District of Columbia, for those inmates who had either their high school diploma or general education development certificate. The program had been at Lorton since 1969 and offered four majors: Urban Studies, Accounting Technology, Library/Media Technology, and Legal Assistance. Inmates could earn associate degrees in all four majors as well as a Bachelor of Arts degree in Urban Studies. As of April 29, 1986, the end of the spring semester, Lorton officials reported 225 inmates were enrolled in the program.

At the precollege level, students could begin classes at any time during the quarter. Once placed in classes, each inmate mastered at his own pace the skills laid out by the competency-based curriculum followed Lorton-wide. This curriculum, which was adopted from the District's public school system, specified skills that each inmate was to learn in a particular class. For example, if the inmate were in an adult basic education math class, he would learn about fractions, addition, subtraction, etc. Instructors also devised their own lesson plans and subject matter tests. An inmate's promotion to the next level, which in most facilities would occur at the beginning of the next quarter, was determined by academic achievement test results, teachers' assessments, and/or mastering 80 percent of the skills taught.

Because each facility was given some freedom in how it achieved the overall objective of its academic programs, differences exist. For example, one of these differences was the minimum number of classes in which an inmate could enroll, ranging from five classes to one. Another difference was some schools allowed inmates to mix and match levels: they could take one adult basic education english course, one adult basic

education language course, and one pregeneral education development math course.

Lorton's academic programs had not been accredited. To facilitate achieving accreditation, Department of Corrections officials said they had taken steps to get all their teachers certified and their curriculum standardized. According to information provided by Lorton officials, as of February 6, 1987, 64 percent of the academic instructors were certified, and the remaining 36 percent had completed required classwork and were awaiting completion of the certification application process. Department officials had not set a time frame for beginning the accreditation process but were planning to seek it through the same organization that accredits the District's schools (i.e., the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools).

Apprenticeship Program Area

The apprenticeship program area was certified through the District's Apprenticeship and Training Office and included the following fields as of June 30, 1986: carpentry, culinary arts, electrician, landscaping, and upholstery. Three other certified programs—dental technology, plumbing, and stationary engineer—were not being offered as of June 30, 1986, because they lacked instructors.⁵ The culinary arts program was certified in 1974; the other programs were certified in 1984. According to Lorton officials, the apprenticeship program was offered only at Central because it was the only facility where inmates had enough time left to serve and freedom of movement within the facility to make the program practical for them as well as being the only facility with enough space to house the equipment needed to meet the apprenticeship program requirements. It is also the only program area, except academic, that gave a nationally recognized certificate.

To enter the program, interested inmates housed at Central were screened by the program director to ensure that their sentence, education level, and attitude are compatible with the requirements of the program. Apprenticeships take about 3 to 4 years to complete, depending on the program, and the program director wanted inmates who only had about that much time left before they were released to the community. This way, the skills attained by the inmate would not become rusty while waiting for release. Inmates must also have a high school diploma or the general education development certificate and be willing to put

⁵The dental technology and plumbing programs had been without an instructor since January 1986. Stationary engineer has never had an instructor since it was certified in 1984.

forth the effort required by the program. After screening, the inmate was given the General Aptitude Test Battery by certified members of the U.S. Department of Labor to determine in what program an inmate was best suited. Once these initial criteria were met, the inmate was interviewed by the vocational development specialist and the program director. A new inmate had to wait for a new quarter to begin before entering the apprenticeship program. Inmates in the program were to participate all day in on-the-job training and classroom-related instruction. According to a Lorton official, 52 inmates were enrolled in the program as of June 30, 1986.

Industries Program Area

Central was the only facility that had the industries program area. The unit was to be self-supporting through the sale of products and services to the federal and District of Columbia governments. According to Lorton officials, the only inmates who could work in the industries program area were those who were housed at Central because of the security problems involved in transporting other inmates to Central.

The industries program area consisted of five different and separate shops: furniture repair and upholstery, print, metal fabrication, clothing, and laundry. Inmates in the business office, maintenance, and the warehouse supported these shops. Inmates who had jobs at a shop were paid hourly wages (from \$0.34 to \$0.94 per hour) and accrued leave at the rate of 6 hours per month.⁴ Inmate workers also accrued good time that could be used to reduce their maximum sentence. Inmates who had completed their schooling and were not participating in other programs were preferred hires because industry was considered a full-time job. Inmates who were hired and were participating in other programs were given 1 hour a day to attend other programs.

To participate in the industries program, an inmate was either recommended for the program by the classification committee or requested an interview with the industries' counselor. Regardless of how the inmate was referred, the inmate filled out a job application and then was interviewed by the industries' counselor who determined the inmate's suitability for work. Based on the application and interview data, the counselor then referred the paperwork of suitable inmates to the shops

⁴Inmates could also be paid overtime and receive bonuses. Bonus pay was paid when a shop exceeded its predetermined production for any month. Bonus pay could not exceed 55 percent of the inmate's hourly pay rate.

with openings. (If no openings existed, the inmate was placed on a waiting list.) The paperwork was then reviewed by the shop supervisor to determine who would or would not be interviewed. Based on the interview, the shop supervisor decided whether or not to hire the inmate. If a self-referred inmate was hired, his caseworker would be notified so that he/she could initiate action to reclassify the inmate. Industries' goal was to employ 25 percent of the inmates at Central. According to Lorton officials, the percentage employed would fluctuate, however, due to workload demand. As of June 30, 1986, according to a Lorton official, industries employed 395 inmates or about 32 percent of Central's inmate population.

Psychological Program Area

All facilities at Lorton had a psychological unit and a psychiatric clinic. Residents could obtain help from these services through self-referral or referrals made by a caseworker, correctional officer, or other staff member. Once a referral was made, a psychologist would test and/or interview the inmate to determine what, if any, treatment was needed. If further treatment was needed, it could consist of attending individual or group therapy for 1 hour a week. The psychologist could also determine that medication may have been necessary to stabilize the inmate and would have then referred the inmate to the psychiatrist.

The District's Department of Human Services provided part-time psychiatric assistance at Lorton. Each week for about 3 hours, a psychiatrist screened residents at each facility to determine whether the resident should receive psychiatric treatment including whether psychotropic medication should be given or if the inmate was currently on medication, whether the medication should be continued.

Substance Abuse Program Area

The Drug and Alcohol Abuse Program and its predecessor, Stepping Stones, were the principal drug and alcohol programs at Lorton during our review period. Private contractors provided both programs. The objectives of the substance abuse program area were to move participants from dependency to self-sufficiency; reduce and prevent the incidence of substance abuse among inmates who participated in the program area; and ameliorate institutional problems that stemmed from residents' substance abuse. Inmates referred to the program had either a history of alcohol or illicit drug abuse or a positive urinalysis test for

drugs.⁵ These eligibility requirements were uniform throughout Lorton. According to a program official, inmates within 6 to 18 months of release were given priority for participating in the program.

Each facility had at least one counselor who screened and admitted inmates into the program area. The program area entailed about 7 hours a week and included individual counseling, group counseling, and substance abuse education.

The counselors also held 2-day seminars to educate inmates on the effects of alcoholism and chemical dependency. The seminars were designed mainly for inmates who did not actually abuse drugs but were involved in a drug-related offense or for inmates who the correctional staff believed could benefit from the seminars. The facilities also provided for self-help groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous.

Vocational Program Area

The goal of the vocational program area was to give inmates an opportunity to develop or sharpen skills in a particular area through a combination of theory and practical application. Vocational classes were offered in automotive mechanics, welding, typewriting, barbering, landscaping, housekeeping, shoe repair, typewriter repair, building maintenance, photography, brick masonry, dry wall, graphic arts, printing, digital electronics repair, auto body repair, carpentry, and culinary arts.⁶ These classes are not offered at all the facilities, however, because what a facility offered depended on the types of inmates housed and the space available to hold classes. For example, Maximum, whose population is generally constrained, only had typing.

To enter a vocational program, an inmate should have had the capability of reading at the fifth grade level or been working toward that reading level by simultaneously attending classes in the academic program area. This requirement, however, was not strictly enforced because, according to the Assistant for Vocational Programs, if it were, the program would have fewer inmates enrolled. An inmate could enter a class at any time during the quarter. An inmate in the program attended the class for half a day. If he had his high school diploma, general education

⁵The Department conducted regular, random, and unannounced urine tests. According to regulation, the tests were conducted to determine the degree of substance abuse, to identify the type of substances being abused, and to evaluate and recommend treatment for the abusers.

⁶Plumbing was on Lorton's vocational class list but had not had an instructor since about April 1985.

development certificate, or the desire, he could go to class in different vocations in the morning and afternoon. As of June 30, 1986, 430 inmates (about 9 percent of Lorton's population) were participating in vocational programs according to a Lorton official.

Every vocational program had a certain number of hours that must be completed before an inmate could receive a certificate of completion. If the inmate left the program before completing it and the instructor found the inmate's work satisfactory, he could receive a certificate of achievement. Both certificates would show what aspects of the program the inmate had completed and the total hours of participation.

Like the academic program area, Department of Corrections officials plan to seek accreditation for Lorton's vocational programs. In that regard, Lorton officials told us that, as of February 6, 1987, 47 percent of the vocational school instructors were certified or licensed in their trade.

Work Detail Program Area

The work detail program area consisted of work squads that were found Lorton-wide. The general categories of work details were housekeeping, administrative/clerical, trade, culinary, landscaping, and labor. The Minimum facility had an agriculture detail on the dairy farm located on Lorton. The number of inmates that could participate on a work detail fluctuated among facilities because the number of details depended on the number of correctional staff available to supervise inmates, the security level of the facility, and the needs of the facility. Those inmates who were employed on a detail squad could either be paid from \$6.50 to \$21 a month or volunteer while waiting for a paid position to become vacant. Work performed on a detail could either take all day or part of the day. Inmates often found their own jobs by talking to correctional officers or other inmates. They then cleared the assignment with their caseworker and would ultimately be reclassified to formally recognize the participation. Caseworkers considered participation on a work detail secondary to participation in academic programs, especially if the inmate did not have his high school diploma or general education development certificate or lacked a vocation.

Other Program Areas

Three other program areas existed at Lorton: work training furlough, recreation, and religion programs. To be eligible for a work training furlough, which was only available at Minimum, an inmate must, among other things, have been within 1 year of his parole date or sentence

Appendix I
Detailed Information on Lorton's
Classification Process and Programs

expiration, be classified as minimum custody, and be approved by the Department of Corrections. Under the program, inmates held jobs in the Washington metropolitan area that paid at least the minimum wage. The inmates were transported to these jobs everyday and their on-site attendance was to be checked periodically by a member of the Corrections Department. The objectives of the program were to assign inmates to jobs that were commensurate with their skills and future goals and to train them about job responsibilities and techniques for getting and maintaining a job.

The objective of the recreation program area was to involve every inmate in some form of activity for physical and/or mental growth. The objective was carried out through a wide range of sports, entertainment, and cultural activities that run all during the day and after dinner. The objective of the religion program area was to provide opportunities for religious participation through services and other activities. The chaplains or other religious leaders also offered counseling and education classes and conducted initial religious interviews with newly admitted inmates.

Requests for copies of GAO reports should be sent to:

U.S. General Accounting Office
Post Office Box 6015
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877

Telephone 202-275-6241

The first five copies of each report are free. Additional copies are \$2.00 each.

There is a 25% discount on orders for 100 or more copies mailed to a single address.

Orders must be prepaid by cash or by check or money order made out to the Superintendent of Documents.

United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use \$300

Address Correction Requested

First-Class Mail
Postage & Fees Paid
GAO
Permit No. G100