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A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE FINANCIAL
STATUS OF INMATES RELEASED FROM
THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



ACQUISITIONS

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PREFACE

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A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE FINANCIAL STATUS
OF INMATES RELEASED FROM THE
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine the amount of money inmates released from the Texas Department of Corrections had available to make the transition from prison to life in the outside world.

BACKGROUND

Article 6166Z1 of the Texas Civil Statutes provides that inmates released from the Texas Department of Corrections receive \$200. This money is paid to all inmates who discharge, parole or receive a conditional pardon regardless of the amount of time spent in confinement or the financial status of the offender. Approximately 99 percent of all inmates released from TDC receive the \$200.

In addition to the \$200, each inmate receives any funds held to his/her credit in the Department's Inmate Trust Fund. The Inmate Trust Fund is the inmate banking system and was established to eliminate currency within the prison units. Scrip issued by the trust fund is issued in limited quantities bi-weekly and is used for sundry purchases in the unit commissaries. Any funds in excess of the amount each inmate can draw in scrip is maintained in the trust fund.

METHODOLOGY

In order to ascertain the funds inmates had available at

their release, two procedures were necessary. First a computer-generated list of the balance of each inmate's trust fund account at time of release was obtained for the year 1975. This list showed the funds held by the Department which belonged to the inmate and would be given to them at release.

Second, a random sample (N = 218) of inmates released from TDC during January 1976 were interviewed. These inmates were potential participants in the Transitional Aid Research Project. Each inmate was asked if he/she had any money at home or in a bank. If the question was answered "yes," the amount of money was recorded.

RESULTS

In 1975, 7,801 inmates were released from the Texas Department of Corrections. However, 7,897 inmates had their Inmate Trust Fund accounts closed in anticipation of release. The discrepancy (96 inmates) between the number of inmates released and the number of trust fund accounts closed was caused by inmates being scheduled for release and then not being released. No attempt was made to match the lists since they were maintained in separate computer files. Also, it was doubtful that 96 individuals out of 7,800 would cause any significant difference in the outcome of the survey.

The review of the trust fund records revealed that 33.37 percent of the inmates released in 1975 had no funds at the time of release. The range of funds was from zero to \$5,889. The median was \$5, while the mode was zero. The mean amount of

money the inmates had at the time of release was \$49. However, the data was extremely skewed. Ninety-one percent of the inmates released in 1975 had \$100 or less in their trust fund account at the time of release. Table 1 contains a frequency distribution of the trust fund balances at the time of release.

Table 2 contains a frequency distribution of Transitional Aid Research Project participants' outside monetary resources at the time of release. The range of outside resources was from zero to \$5,000. Of the 218 inmates sampled, 91.28 percent had no money available from outside sources such as banks, savings accounts, etc.

In summary, inmates released from the Texas Department of Corrections will receive \$200 gate money from the state. The majority of the inmates will have little or no other financial resources.

TABLE 1

INMATE TRUST FUND BALANCE AT TIME OF RELEASE
FROM THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS - 1975

Amount of Money in Trust Fund (Dollars)	Number of Inmates	Percent of Inmates	Cumulative Percent
0	2635	33.37	33.37
1 - 5	1433	18.15	51.52
6 - 10	791	10.02	61.54
11 - 15	526	6.66	68.20
16 - 20	435	5.51	73.71
21 - 25	315	3.99	77.70
26 - 30	199	2.52	80.22
31 - 35	161	2.04	82.26
36 - 40	131	1.66	83.92
41 - 50	181	2.29	86.21
51 - 60	124	1.57	87.78
61 - 70	90	1.14	88.92
71 - 80	82	1.04	89.96
81 - 90	73	.92	90.88
91 - 100	57	.72	91.60
101 - 150	195	2.47	94.07
151 - 200	87	1.10	95.17
200 - 250	61	.77	95.94
251 - 300	52	.66	96.60
301 - 400	58	.73	97.33
401 - 500	37	.47	97.80
501 or more	174	2.20	100.00
TOTAL	7897	100.00	100.00

TABLE 2

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF TARP PARTICIPANTS' OUTSIDE
 MONETARY RESOURCES AT TIME OF RELEASE FROM
 THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
 (N = 218)

Amount of Outside Money (Dollars)	Number of Inmates	Percent of Inmates
0	199	91.28
20	1	.46
50	1	.46
87	1	.46
130	1	.46
300	1	.46
350	1	.46
400	2	.92
415	1	.46
800	1	.46
1000	2	.92
1450	1	.46
1500	2	.92
1600	1	.46
2000	2	.92
5000	1	.92
TOTAL	218	100.00

Number with outside sources - 19
 Number with no outside sources - 199

END