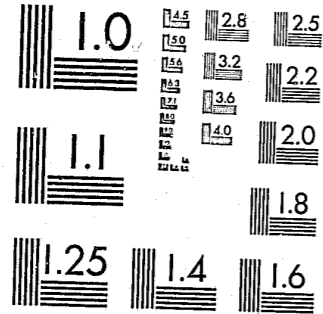


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NATIONAL SURVEY OF  
CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION  
EMPLOYEE ATTRITION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY	1
A.	INTRODUCTION	1
B.	SIGNIFICANCE OF ATTRITION AS A PROBLEM	2
C.	FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHER LEVELS OF ATTRITION	4
D.	RECOMMENDATIONS	7
E.	FINAL OBSERVATIONS	12
II.	REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	13
A.	INTRODUCTION	13
B.	MEASURING AND CLASSIFYING TURNOVER	13
C.	THE TURNOVER PROCESS	15
D.	FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH TURNOVER	16
E.	CONCLUSION	22
III.	PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS	23
A.	INTRODUCTION	23
B.	METHODOLOGICAL SUMMARY	23
C.	DESCRIPTIVE FINDINGS	26
D.	COMPARISON TO PREVIOUS STUDIES	28
E.	FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH HIGH AND LOW RATES OF ATTRITION	30
F.	GENERAL SUMMARY	42
IV.	IMPLEMENTATION	43
A.	INTRODUCTION	43
B.	ASSESSMENT OF ATTRITION IN FIVE STATES	43
C.	REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS	48
	1. Management Planning to Reduce Attrition	48
	2. Improved Assessment of Attrition	50
	3. Adequate and Sufficient Salaries	54
	4. Salary Decompression	57
	5. Participation in Post and Shift Selection	59
	6. Employee Relations Programs	61
	7. Job Content Improvement	63
	8. Incentive Pay Increments	64
	9. Career Ladder Development	66
	10. Standard Administration of Work Hours and Wages	68
	11. Employee Training Programs	69
V.	BIBLIOGRAPHY	71
VI.	APPENDIX	82

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

In 1979, there were 121,919 employees of state correctional institutions, according to the American Correctional Association Directory. During that year, over 29,000 of these employees left their jobs. These employees probably had received at least three million hours of training, and had at least 130,000 months of collective experience in correctional operations. Over 18,000 of them simply quit their jobs. Over 5,000 of them left involuntarily due to disciplinary actions or reductions in force. Over 2,000 of them retired, and about 4,000 of them were promoted, usually because some other employee left his or her job.

Corrections has been described as a "revolving door", because of the impression that many prisoners who are discharged from prison return. Few people realize that corrections is certainly a revolving door for its employees: many enter positions only to leave them after several months, or several years. They experience challenge, hard work, and opportunity. They also experience poor pay, frustration, danger, lack of communication, extraordinary human problems, stress, and burnout.

Clearly, employee attrition is a major problem to correctional institutions. It occurs frequently, and it has adverse consequences in terms of immediate recruitment and training costs, and subsequent production and performance results. The purpose of this project is to identify levels of employee attrition, and to identify management and situational factors associated with higher and lower levels of attrition. This

summary will attempt to answer three basic questions:

To what extent is attrition of correctional employees occurring nationally and regionally, as well as in specific types of correctional institutions?

Why is it occurring? What conditions are associated with it?

What can be done about it?

The subsequent chapters provide more detail about several of these areas, based upon responses to a national survey completed by almost 200 correctional institutions.

A. EXTENT OF ATTRITION

The following table illustrates probable levels of attrition in state correctional institutions across the United States.

TABLE 1.01  
CATEGORICAL ATTRITION RATES  
STATE CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS  
N=168

TYPE OF ATTRITION	ADMIN	SUPPT	C-OFF	SUPCO	PRGRM	TOTAL
Promotions	8.4%	3.1%	3.1%	5.5%	4.6%	3.8%
Retire/nondisability	1.3%	2.0%	1.0%	2.0%	0.3%	1.2%
Retire/disability	0.0%	0.8%	0.5%	0.3%	0.2%	0.4%
Disciplinary actions	1.8%	1.2%	3.7%	0.7%	1.1%	2.8%
Other invol. actions	1.2%	1.2%	2.1%	0.9%	1.6%	1.6%
Voluntary resignations	7.3%	13.6%	17.5%	4.7%	10.2%	14.1%
TOTAL ATTRITION RATE	20.0%	21.9%	27.9%	14.1%	18.0%	23.9%

This table illustrates the attrition rates for five types of employees, and illustrates the categories of attrition for each type. They are administrators, support services, correctional officers, supervisory correctional officers, and program employees. Thus, for 100 supervisory correctional officers over a one year period, 5-6 will leave their jobs due to promotion to a higher position, and about 6 will leave corrections altogether.

Because this survey focused primarily on institutions, attrition rates for administrative employees in central administrative offices are not identified. However, it is interesting to note that the highest levels of attrition for any type of correctional employee is that of the state correctional administrators. Their attrition rate for 1978 and 1979 was 35%, as compared to 24% for all correctional employees in institutions.

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF ATTRITION AS A PROBLEM

As the review of the literature will document, there is little

research on the negative impacts of attrition. Generally, such impacts are assumed, and studies either try to describe the process itself, or illustrate methods to reduce its extent. The basic purpose of this project has been to document the extent of attrition and to identify methods to reduce it. However, we have also explored, within the context of the other objectives, the negative effects as well.

First, it is useful to observe that, at a direct and simplistic level, the reduction of employee turnover rates will immediately cost more money than the continuation of high levels of turnover. There are two basic reasons for this:

As employees remain in positions, usually they receive salary increases due to their length of service. Thus, an organization with a workforce with greater longevity will cost more in personnel funds than the same organization with more new employees. In addition, employees with longer service become eligible for, or vest, other fringe benefits which then add to personnel costs. In Minnesota and Michigan, for example, employees with greater service receive more annual leave days per year than new employees, as a reward and incentive for longevity. This increases the numbers of officers required to staff posts, further increasing costs.

Programs to reduce attrition often cost money. Such programs include higher levels of pay, greater opportunities for participation in post and job assignment decisions, and other changes. These efforts usually do not come without cost.

There are two types of direct costs which can offset the costs of lowering attrition, and which lead to our conclusion that it is ultimately cheaper to reduce attrition:

Training costs for new employees can be considerable, especially when one considers that such costs include not only the direct costs of several weeks of initial training, which according to a detailed study can run between \$500 and \$1000 per employee; but also participation costs. Participation costs are the costs associated with running a new officer's post while he or she is off at training. Such costs occur as overtime expenses, additional staff costs, or simply lost productivity because a job does not get done which would have been done had the officer or employee been available.

Costs directly associated with a resignation and subsequent hiring of a replacement can be considerable. There are direct costs of higher levels of personnel paperwork, as well as indirect costs of lost work when an employee is in the process of resignation. Most employees who resign show a lower level of production prior to actually leaving, due to a low state of motivation, pursuit of alternate employment,

or actual duties associated with resignation such as exit interviews or transfer of retirement funds.

There is yet another level of cost associated with attrition. This is reduced productivity resulting from lack of experience and proficiency in work tasks for new employees. Correctional employment is inherently more complex than similar employment outside of prisons, because of the interaction between functions within an institution. A nurse, for example, must not only be medically competent, but must also coordinate with other aspects of institutional operation and environment, such as security procedures, schedules, and classification processes. Becoming competent and at ease with such a complex of requirements may take several months if not several years. Should an experienced nurse resign, his or her replacement will take longer to complete tasks, and require more help in completing those tasks, and make more mistakes in completing those tasks, than the nurse who resigned. This condition will persist for many months.

Such lost productivity due to attrition "costs" an institution in mistakes, work not completed or never started, and in the time necessary to respond to major mistakes, such as the pursuit of escapes or response to incidents. These problems compound in many ways. A misfiled document can "cost" in time to retrieve it or recreate it, and file it properly. It can "cost" in frustration and inefficiency for a trained and competent employee whose work is disrupted or rendered invalid by a missing document. It can "cost" if the missing document results in a bad decision, leading to an incident such as an escape or assault. It can "cost" if all of these conditions frustrate yet additional employees and lead to their resignations.

#### C. FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHER LEVELS OF ATTRITION

This project not only surveyed attrition levels in institutions, but we also requested information about management practices and working conditions, to identify possible circumstances associated with higher levels of attrition and possible solutions to the problem.

By comparing attrition rates of institutions which score above and below average on a variety of measures, characteristics which are associated with higher levels of attrition can be identified. This research cannot prove that these conditions cause attrition. In most instances, however, common sense would suggest such an association. It is also not possible to determine from this data the possible effect of implementation of each of these conditions alone, since in many institutions several practices associated in general with higher or lower attrition are present at once. It is our opinion that no one practice would account alone for a change in attrition. Rather, many of these should be implemented together.

Four general conditions were associated with attrition: benefits and perceived benefits, supervisory style, management practices

and job content, and unionization.

#### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS BY AREA

AREA: FINDINGS:

Benefits and perceived benefits

Higher starting salaries for correctional officers were associated with lower levels of attrition. For example, institutions paying less than \$10,000 in 1979 had total attrition rates for correctional officers of 31%, while institutions paying more than \$10,000 had average rates of 21%.

Higher salaries relative to overall state incomes per capita were also associated with lower levels of attrition. For example, when starting salary was less than 1.5 times the state per capita income (all personal income divided by the state population), then attrition for correctional officers averaged 29%, as compared to 18% when starting salaries exceeded the 1.5 times level.

Higher salaries for supervisory officers were also associated with lower attrition rates. Not only were rates apparently lower for supervisory officers when the starting salary was greater than \$13,000, but correctional officer and total rates were significantly lower as well. Under conditions of higher supervisory officer pay, correctional officer attrition was 21% as compared to 29%.

Characteristics of retirement plans were associated with attrition levels. Where annual current values were higher, voluntary resignations among correctional officers stood at 12% as compared to 19% where the values were lower. When minimum ages to retire were lower, correctional officer attrition was 21% as compared to 29%, and for all employees it was 17% as compared to 25%.

Salary compression, as measured by a low ratio between the starting salary of a correctional officer and the starting salary of a supervisory officer, was associated with attrition. For example, when compression was 1.22 or less, attrition for all employees averaged 24%, as compared to 19% when compression was greater than 1.22.

Supervisory style

When officers participate in decisions as to their post assignments, shift assignments, vacation schedules, and overtime assignments, attrition rates are lower. For example, in institutions where officers bid on posts and shifts according to seniority or other criteria, correctional officer attrition rates averaged 21%, as compared to 30% in institutions without such procedures.

Management practices and job content

Modest differences in attrition rates were found in institutions in localities where public attitudes about correctional employees were more favorable, as reported by institutional officials. This finding is difficult to interpret, as the positive public attitudes may contribute to lower attrition, or lower attrition may contribute to more positive public attitudes, and because the size of the differences was very small.

Correctional officer attrition rates were lower in institutions which employed greater percentages of prisoners in prison industry programs: in institutions where more than 15% of the population worked in prison industries, attrition of officers averaged 20%, as compared to 28% under conditions of lower industrial involvement.

Attrition rates were higher in institutions offering work release programs as their major activity for more than 40% of the population. In such institutions, overall attrition averaged 30% as compared to 24% for all institutions in the study.

Attrition rates were slightly lower in institutions with single occupancy housing units, such as cells or rooms. When more than 50% of the prisoners were housed in single occupancy, attrition averaged 22%, as compared to 26% in the rest of the institutions.

Employee Representation

Unionization of employees was strongly associated with lower attrition rates. In unionized institutions, attrition rates averaged 20% for correctional officers and 18% for all employees. In less unionized institutions, correctional officer attrition averaged 34% and general attrition averaged 28%.



#### D. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are some recommendations which should result in lower attrition rates if implemented in institutions or state prison systems where attrition is a problem. They are based upon the findings of this study, as well as recommendations, standards, and findings drawn from elsewhere in the literature on this problem. Chapter Four presents the second, or implementation phase of the study. In that chapter, the recommendations are described in greater detail, and methods for specific application are presented.

##### RECOMMENDATION #1 MANAGEMENT PLANNING TO REDUCE ATTRITION

Each agency should develop a concise plan of administrative actions and legislative recommendations to achieve satisfactory levels of employee attrition, not to exceed 15% per year for voluntary attrition, and 20% per year for all types of attrition.

Based upon discussions with officials in each agency, the following procedure has been identified for the development of an action-plan to reduce employee attrition. The procedure is described more fully in Chapter Four.

1. Identify target attrition rates.
2. Identify locations and jobs wherein attrition exceeds the target rates.
3. Select specific problem areas for priority attention.
4. Identify the type of action required for each priority group.
5. Plan and implement recommended actions.
6. Develop a process to monitor implementation and to assess results.

Rationale: Employee attrition is a complex problem requiring a complex of efforts to achieve significant reductions. This requires careful planning.

The plan should incorporate statistical reporting called for in Recommendation Number Two, as well as provide for implementation of some or all of the other recommendations below. The plan must, of course, recognize the role of the Governor and Legislature of each state in the achievement of many of these recommendations.

##### RECOMMENDATION #2 IMPROVED ASSESSMENT OF ATTRITION

All state correctional agencies should develop procedures for gathering, at least annually, information on attrition in correctional agencies and institutions.

Although the five states visited reveal a great variation in record-keeping on attrition, none is fully satisfied with its present capacity to analyze turnover figures. Most officials interviewed indicated that the key problem in the assessment of attrition was the identification of useful management reports

that could stimulate, inform, and monitor corrective action by managers at every level of the agency. Several criteria for such a reporting system were suggested:

An effective report system should immediately report key data in a simple and relevant format.

The reports should target management responsibility.

The reports should be ongoing, so that progress over time can be monitored.

While computerization is desirable, it should not be necessary to maintain records on a computer system to provide the needed management support.

The authors have attempted to identify the key information of use in the analysis and management of the employee attrition problem, organized in a one-page format which could be generated for the agency as a whole, or for specific subdivisions or areas of management responsibility. A hypothetical mockup of such a report appears in Chapter Four.

Rationale: The problem of attrition cannot be systematically resolved until it is measured on an ongoing basis, to permit identification of problem areas for each agency, and to assess progress in resolving the problems.

##### RECOMMENDATION #3 ADEQUATE SALARIES

Starting salaries for correctional officers should be not less than 1.5 times the state per capita income (all personal income divided by the state population) reported for the previous year. Chapter Four provides a method for the determination of such a salary on a statewide basis.

Rationale: Salaries are very highly associated with attrition. In this project, institutions with starting salaries of less than 1.5 times the state per capita income experienced attrition rates which averaged 24% for all staff, as compared to 16% when salary was greater than 150%. Previous studies, such as the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, have recommended salary adequacy, and the American Correctional Association Commission on Accreditation has recommended comparability, based upon periodic surveys.

##### RECOMMENDATION #4 SALARY DECOMPRESSION

Starting salaries for supervisory officers should not be less than 1.3 times the starting salary for correctional officers. Chapter Four includes a table illustrating the specific application of this recommendation to the five participating states.

Rationale: Starting salaries for supervisory correctional

officers should offer an appropriate reward and incentive for the responsibilities and obligations of supervision.

RECOMMENDATION #5 PARTICIPATION IN POST AND SHIFT SELECTION

Each agency or institution should develop a written procedure providing the opportunity for correctional officers and other appropriate employees, after two years of service, to participate in the selection of the posts and shifts they will work, as well as their assignment to overtime. Such participation should be based upon criteria which include capacity to perform the duties of the post, seniority, and organizational needs. Prior to two years of service, post and shift assignments should be made on the basis of training and orientation requirements.

Methods to achieve such participation may vary according to the size, staffing adequacy, and complexity of each institution involved. Chapter Four provides a range of program models of such approaches, ranging from flexible advisory systems to structured bidding systems.

Rationale: Post and shift selection systems appear to reduce attrition rates, by allowing employees to work in the areas and at the times they prefer, and by creating incentives for longevity. However, they can create attrition by assigning new employees to the least desirable shifts and posts. Thus, for several years, new employees should be assigned to posts by management, according to a system of orientation and training, and those posts should not be less desirable than other typical posts.

RECOMMENDATION #6 EMPLOYEE RELATIONS PROGRAMS

Correctional institutions should develop procedures to encourage individual and collective employee comment and exchange upon institutional problems, procedures, and plans. One such procedure, the "Quality Circle", is described in Chapter Four.

Rationale: While unionization sometimes achieves this objective, other approaches are also feasible, including employee relations officers, employee advisory councils, "quality circles" such as exist in Japan and in certain American industries, and suggestion/grievance procedures. This survey found that unionized institutions typically average substantially lower attrition rates than non-union institutions. Unionization may not be a legal, feasible, or preferred option for many institutions, and therefore many prisons will attempt to reduce attrition by improving compensation and employee satisfaction in a non-union context. In such instances, alternative vehicles for employee comment and exchange should not be overlooked.

RECOMMENDATION #7 JOB CONTENT IMPROVEMENT

Research and evaluation should be undertaken at the agency and

national level to identify specific job designs or tasks associated with attrition, and possible alternative work methods to reduce these effects.

Rationale: Some employees may find that certain aspects of correctional work are highly unpleasant. To the extent that many employees share these perceptions, such job elements may initiate unnecessary attrition.

RECOMMENDATION #8 INCENTIVE PAY INCREMENTS

Each agency should develop, within its overall employee compensation plan, a system of flexible incentive pay increments or bonuses to encourage work in positions, functions, and locations characterized by employee attrition.

Rationale: Flexible and targeted incentive systems can achieve specific effects at lower costs than blanket approaches applied to general classes of employees. Such increments might be targeted at the following types of problems:

Employees working in locations where the statewide pay levels do not provide competitive compensation might receive bonuses to alleviate the problem.

Employees performing tasks which are not considered desirable by most employees might be rewarded, so as to encourage other employees to take on such duties, and to encourage current employees to continue.

Increments might be used to experiment with career ladder innovations or similar efforts, to determine effectiveness prior to the establishment of permanent rules and regulations establishing the program.

Increments might be used to encourage participation in other attrition reduction programs, such as a quality circle program.

Some officials have suggested that a program characterized by administrative discretion, where administrators may target positions, functions, or activities at will, would possibly create perceived inequity among employees not receiving the increments, possibly increasing attrition. Another criticism is that such increments, targeted at institutions with high attrition rates, would reward the attrition, and discourage administrative action in other areas to reduce the rates.

These problems must be acknowledged. However, they can be minimized by the approach taken in the administration of the program. The problems are offset by the potential cost economies enabled by targeting compensation increases directly at problem areas, without the requirement to expend funds on functions, areas, and activities not characterized by the attrition problem.

RECOMMENDATION #9

CAREER LADDER DEVELOPMENT

Each agency should develop a structure of promotional incentives to encourage employees to remain with the agency as a career. Several problems and issues surrounding the provision of career ladders in corrections are discussed in Chapter Four. These include the question of the generalist (vs. specialist) advancement pattern, advancement limitations facing support and program personnel as well as women in corrections, and the impact of economic conditions upon career development possibilities.

Rationale: Promotional systems have a positive impact on both recruiting and retention. It benefits not only on those who are promoted, but also in line staff who may receive better supervision by a more qualified and capable supervisor, and who may also look forward to promotional opportunities themselves. Michigan has developed a carefully designed program which not only rewards longevity, but also encourages officers to work within housing units, which has been a less popular assignment at some times in the past.

RECOMMENDATION #10

STANDARD ADMINISTRATION OF WORK  
HOURS AND WAGES

The administration of compensation for hours worked, especially for overtime, as well as the scheduling of holidays and annual leave, should be uniform and consistent with written procedure.

Rationale: One explanation for attrition which employees expressed in several states was the requirement to work extra hours without compensation or compensatory time off. While compensatory time and overtime compensation programs can represent a partial solution to this problem, the most basic solution is to manage the creation of posts and positions, and the assignment of persons to them, so as to remove the need to use overtime except for extraordinary and emergency situations.

RECOMMENDATION #11

EMPLOYEE TRAINING PROGRAMS

Training programs should be realistic and structured, with respect to location and duration as well as content, so as to not contribute to attrition.

Rationale: This project has not been able to demonstrate that greater levels of employee training would lead to lower attrition rates. However, there are two implications for training projects which arise from the study. First, training programs are necessary elements of some of the preceding recommendations, especially with respect to the development and administration of career ladders. Second, the method of administration of training programs may lead to higher or lower levels of employee attrition. Realistic training programs can achieve lower subsequent attrition rates than ones which create unfulfilled expectations in trainees.

E. FINAL OBSERVATIONS

The remaining chapters provide greater detail as to each of the recommendations in this introduction, as well as a more complete explanation of the findings and their relation to the recommendations. Chapter Two provides a review of relevant studies, books, and reports on the problem of attrition as it has been managed within the field of corrections, and in other fields. Chapter Three provides a detailed summary of the findings of a national survey conducted as a part of this project to identify levels of attrition in correctional institutions, as well as management factors associated with attrition. Chapter Four illustrates how the recommendations summarized in Chapter One can be implemented in correctional systems, including a study of attrition in five state correctional systems.



## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews previous studies of attrition. In a study of correctional attrition in Florida (Wilkins and Bechtold, 1979), the authors observed: "Though a great deal [of research and study] has been accomplished, much of the information is unclear, and it is not uncommon to see conflicting findings among highly respectable studies." That comment remains true.

This review organizes previous research along the following lines:

measuring and classifying attrition;  
the turnover process; and  
factors associated with turnover:  
benefits and perceived benefits,  
supervisory style,  
management practices and job content, and  
unionization.

The purpose of the review is to place the current research effort in the perspective of previous studies, and to establish a foundation upon which the current project can build.

#### B. MEASURING AND CLASSIFYING TURNOVER

Szilagyi (1979, p. 43) has drawn a distinction among three possible ways of measuring turnover: the instability rate, separation rate, and wastage rate. The following are the

recommended methods for calculation of those rates:

instability rate:  $\frac{\# \text{ who left}}{\# \text{ at beginning of period}}$

separation rate:  $\frac{\# \text{ who left}}{\text{average } \# \text{ during period}}$

wastage rate:  $\frac{\# \text{ who left}}{\# \text{ newly acquired during period}}$

Lunden (1965, pp. 4ff) has suggested a more complicated version of a separation rate. The average of all accessions plus separations is the turnover measure or "number who left" above, and the average of the number of employees at the beginning of the year plus number at the end becomes the estimate of the number of employees. A simpler, yet valid measure was chosen for the present study: the number of separations in a year divided by the number of full-time equivalent authorized positions. This approach substantially reduced respondent effort, and also permitted the construction of sub-measures by type of employee and type of separation.

Types of turnover have been classified in several ways. Lunden's (1965) study typifies an early, descriptive approach. For example, "reasons of change" are listed in categories such as "change of administration or 'politics'", or "resignation due to poor health or to enter business". Lunden's categories are somewhat subjective, and difficult to use for administrative interpretation of turnover problems. Lefkowitz and Katz (1969) pointed out the general tendency in the literature to overlook distinctions of voluntary versus involuntary and avoidable versus unavoidable terminations (Lefkowitz and Katz, p. 447).

Szilagyi (1979, p. 43) differentiates the "number who left" according to four categories:

- 1) voluntary for organizational reasons (promotion, supervisory relations, etc.)
- 2) voluntary for personal reasons (health, retirement, relocation)
- 3) involuntary (terminated by the organization)
- 4) internal (transfer, promotion, etc.)

His study focused upon the dynamics of the process by which an employee makes the decision to terminate. It considered only those terminations that were voluntary and due to organizational reasons. Szilagyi states that "since involuntary turnover and internal turnover are actions initiated by the organization in

its own interest, they probably should not be considered actual or effective turnover" (1979, p. 52). The authors of the current study disagree, because involuntary (organization-initiated) terminations which are based upon poor worker performance or disciplinary problems may reflect upon the selection and training processes and are therefore "avoidable." The current study classifies terminations as due to "promotion within the agency," "retirement," "disciplinary action," "other involuntary actions," and "voluntary resignation or post abandonment". It therefore permits interpretation along either the voluntary/involuntary or the avoidable/unavoidable lines.

#### C. THE TURNOVER PROCESS

The Szilagyi study (1979, p. 44) provides a model of the turnover process:

organizational characteristics (job characteristics, interpersonal relations, organizational practices, and the reward system) influence job satisfaction; this is mediated also by some characteristics of the individual (age, job tenure, etc.);

job satisfaction influences turnover intention; this is mediated by external job opportunities;

the intention to leave is detectable beforehand, and gives rise to lowered performance level and absenteeism;

after some latent period, turnover takes place.

Atchison and Lefferts (1972, p. 59) suggest that the Herzberg "motivators" (self-actualization and esteem) have a closer relationship to the individual's decision to produce, but that the Herzberg "dissatisfiers" or "hygiene factors" (such as pay, benefits, supervisory style) have a closer association with the decision to participate. Szilagyi (1979, p. 45) suggests further that job dissatisfaction is made up of two components. One is internal dissatisfaction: for example, internal pay dissatisfaction is derived from a comparison of income with work done. A second component is made up of external dissatisfaction: for example, external pay dissatisfaction is derived by comparing what the individual's organization pays with what other organizations pay for the same work. This relates to the theory that a person will leave an organization in the effort to reduce perceived inequity (Telly et al, 1971, p. 166).

O'Reilly and Caldwell (1979, p. 158) call attention to the role that is played by task perception, as opposed to objective task characteristics, in shaping job satisfaction/dissatisfaction. They found that informational cues had a significantly larger impact upon overall satisfaction than the actual job design did (1979, p. 162).

There is strong agreement in the literature that the decision to

leave is typically accompanied by observable behaviors, such as changed attitudes, performance, and attendance (Szilagyi, 1979, p. 45). "They gripe before they leave" (Fleishman and Harris, 1962, p. 50). In a 1966 study by Hulin "leavers" could be distinguished from "stayers", based upon a knowledge of "job satisfaction", up to 12 months before termination (reported in Porter and Steers, 1974, pp. 152f). The single question, "how often do you think about leaving?" is an effective predictor of turnover (Atchison and Lefferts, 1972, p. 56).

#### D. FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH TURNOVER

The goal of the following studies is to identify characteristics of working environments which experience high rates of attrition. Modification of these characteristics could presumably lead to lower attrition rates. An array of factors are associated in the literature with turnover. The depth and scope of research on these factors is very uneven, due in part to the fields of interest of the researchers. Much of the work appears in psychology and sociology journals, where the studies reflect particular concern for motivation and perception. Data is derived frequently from attitudinal instruments and exit interviews. This has yielded some insights into the role played by expectations, interpersonal influences, role ambiguity, alienation, equity, and supervisory style. It has, however, worked to the relative neglect of the role played by organizational practices such as selection, pay, overtime compensation, fringe benefits, retirement programs, training time, the decision process, promotions policies, and unionization. The analysis of staff turnover in the Florida Department of Corrections (Wilkins and Bechtold, 1979) is typical of many of these studies in the use of employee surveys to identify areas of concern. The current study complements this approach by studying actual institutional conditions and practices, rather than perceived problems.

##### 1. Benefits and Perceived Benefits

Ever since the work of Chester Barnard in the 1930s and James March and Herbert Simon in the 1950s, it has been axiomatic that the decision to take or to leave a job depends upon an "economy of incentives," a calculation of how the benefits to be derived from the position (pay, prestige, coworkers, growth opportunity, etc.) compares with the contributions the job demands (work hours, travel time, unpleasant work, etc.). This calculation is based upon subjective perceptions; the degree of attractiveness or onerousness of the job is in the eye of the individual.

It is clear, however, that pay level is a prime consideration in this calculus. Wardens, without exception, traced loss in staff to low salaries (Lunden, 1965, p. vi). Porter and Steers (1974, p. 155) report six studies, performed in the 1960s and 1970s, which reveal that low pay and lack of promotional opportunity represent the primary stated cause for job withdrawal. It has been further shown that it is not the absolute pay, but the

perceived pay inequity that is a primary cause for turnover (Knowles, reported in Porter and Steers, p. 155). Finally, it has been demonstrated that peer influence has a strong influence on the individual's perception of the task (O'Reilly and Caldwell, 1979, p. 162).

Gordon, (Wilkins and Bechtold, 1979, p. 14), set two standards for the adequacy of wages:

1) Pay must be competitive. If an employee's skills are marketable at a higher rate, he or she will be under considerable pressure to change jobs.

2) Pay must be equitable. If an employee believes that he or she is not receiving fair compensation in relation to others, the resulting dissatisfaction may ultimately lead to withdrawal from the organization.

A distinction has been established between the ranks in terms of benefits. Szilagyi (1979, pp. 48ff) found a difference between the ranks in terms of the role of benefits. Pay and external job opportunities predominate in determining turnover for lower level employees, while career opportunities predominate in determining turnover for managers. Telly et al (1971, p.165) found that absenteeism was linked to dissatisfaction with promotion opportunities for supervisors, but to fair pay for non-supervisors.

## 2. Supervisory Style

The following studies examine the behavior of the supervisor as a factor in attrition. Porter and Steers (1974, pp. 158ff) conclude that the supervisor can influence a worker's decision to leave by improving the mutual understanding of job requirements, goals, and methods. They cite a work planning and review program which has been successful in the General Electric Company.

Studies consistently show turnover highest for those work groups whose foremen were rated low in consideration (Porter and Steers, pp. 157ff). In industry a study at International Harvester confirmed a low consideration supervisory style as relating to high labor turnover. This is found to be a curvilinear relationship, which is to say that additional consideration contributes to the decision to stay only up to a point (Fleishman and Harris, 1962, pp. 44-50).

Ley found a high correlation between turnover and authoritarian ratings of supervisors by employees. (Wilkins and Bechtold, 1979, p. 20).

Jacobs and Retsky (1975, p.8) found that when officers observed that there were "too many supervisors" and too many changing rules that job dissatisfaction was also greater. In industry, employees in high turnover shops perceived their supervisors as

less understanding, approachable, supportive, considerate and willing to listen as compared with others' supervisors (Telly et al, 1971, p. 170). Guest (in Porter and Steers, 1974, p. 163) found turnover to be related to a perceived lack of autonomy over one's work. Further, Ross and Zander reported that while stayers and leavers at the outset had similar levels of expectation about the degree of autonomy they would have on the job, those who left reported receiving less autonomy than they expected, while those who remained did not (Porter and Steers, 1974 p. 163), indicating that perceptions of equity had influenced the decision to leave.

Basset's study found turnover higher where supervisors had less than five years' experience (in Porter and Steers, 1974, p. 159), suggesting that perhaps they learn consideration and delegation with the years.

In the Florida study of correctional officer turnover (Wilkins and Bechtold, 1979, p. 39), officer ratings of working conditions and practices were examined using the statistical procedure of factor analysis, to identify intercorrelated measures, reflecting common areas of employee concern. The strongest factor concerned supervision. Line and supervisory employees did not perceive supervision as of equal importance:

".....regarding factor 1 (supervision), employees indicated 38.52 percent of low concern as compared to 75.12 percent of low concern for the supervisors. The obvious conclusion is that the supervisors do not perceive the influence of supervision the same way that employees do." (p.44)

## 3. Management Practices and Job Content

A lack of participation in decision-making has been found to be closely associated with work alienation (Aiken and Hage, 1966, p. 503). Hulin (1968) found that new policies regarding salary administration and promotional opportunities resulted in a drop in turnover from 30% to 12%. Similar results are reported in four other studies, on life insurance agents, operatives, office workers, and store workers (Porter and Steers, 1974, p. 153). Lawler and Hackman found that it was the participation in the development of an incentive plan, rather than the plan itself, which resulted in significantly increased attendance on the job (in Porter and Steers, 1974, pp. 155f). A drop in turnover to 4% was reported for the Eaton Corp. after a program in which blue collar workers were treated like white collar workers: no time clocks, no formal rules or penalties, and freedom to switch work stations. These results were reported for non-union plants (Brown and Moberg, 1980, pp. 419f).

Organizations relying heavily on hierarchical arrangements are likely to be characterized by work alienation. There is a strong direct relationship between rule observation and alienation from work. "The degree of participation in decision-making...and the degree of rule observation...and the degree of job codification...have strong and independent effects on alienation

from work." (Aiken and Hage, 1966, pp. 504r)

Lyons (1971, p.107) also described the relationship between participative approaches to management and worker motivation: "Maier (1965) has pointed out that participative methods may use more time than autocratic methods for making decisions, but they use less time for the explanation and clarification of the steps necessary to carry out the decision since the group members know the facts and factors that were considered in arriving at the decision, know what the goal is and know the information relevant to working on the problem. ...This participative process may be more motivating since the role prescriptions and proscriptions are situationally legitimized and are partly influenced by the role occupants themselves rather than unilaterally presented in varying degrees of comprehensibility to the role occupants by higher authorities."

Wilkins and Bechtold (1979, pp.20ff) point out: "Closely related to supervisory style is the role of communication within the organization. Price's (1972) research has shown that successively higher amounts of instrumental communication (communication directly related to job performance) will probably introduce successively lower amounts of turnover. When instrumental communication is lacking, job dissatisfaction and withdrawal will often result."

Szilagyi (1979, p. 51) suggests that, since decreased performance and absenteeism can signal potential turnover, management be alert to these signs and intervene by interviewing workers and correcting difficulties at this point. Jacobs and Retsky (1975, pp. 11f) state that a cause of job dissatisfaction in the corrections field arises from the social distance between higher echelon guards and new recruits. This is particularly true in those situations where the older guards tend to be white and rural, and the younger guards black and urban. Evan found that turnover was lower when trainees were assigned to departments with two or more other trainees than when a trainee was assigned either alone or with just one other trainee (in Porter and Steers, 1974, p. 159).

Higher turnover has been related to larger-sized work units in three studies, but was found to have no effect in a fourth. Organization size has not been significantly linked with withdrawal by employees (Porter and Steers, 1974 p. 156-159).

With regard to the selection process, a number of personal worker characteristics have been found to correlate with a higher level of turnover. There is a strong negative correlation between age and turnover; that is, younger workers turn over more frequently than older workers do (Szilagyi, 1979 p. 43; Porter and Steers, 1974 p. 164). Individuals who are more highly educated or who have higher growth needs are more likely to leave (Szilagyi, 1979 p. 50). Individuals at either personality extreme (extremely independent or achievement-oriented or extremely anxious or authoritarian) are more likely to leave (Porter and Steers, 1974

p. 166).

The similarity of a job to the individual's vocational interest as revealed by a vocational interest test, is related to lower turnover (Porter and Steers, 1974, p. 166). It is significant, in this connection, that only 1% of teenagers surveyed by a Harris poll indicated any consideration of a prison career (Jacobs and Retsky, 1975 p. 9). These two findings, conjoined, indicate a predisposition for corrections to be a higher-turnover field. As a general matter, it has been found that tenure on the previous job is a highly accurate predictor of likelihood to remain on a new job (Porter and Steers, 1974, p. 165).

As to the orientation and training process, researchers are unanimous on the importance of an open, full, and frank communication of the nature of the job, probable potential for advancement, etc. (Porter and Steers, 1974 p. 172; Wanous, 1973 p. 330; Szilagyi, 1979, p. 51). Wanous has found that a realistic job preview contributes to role clarity. The role of the difference between expectations and reality in making for higher turnover has been established in studies by Weitz, Youngberg, Macedonia, and Katzell (reported in Porter and Steers, 1974, p. 153). A realistic picture of the job, including difficulties, does not lead to significantly lower job acceptance, but does lead to reduced turnover, by bringing the entrant's expectations into alignment with the rewards available (Porter and Steers, 1974, p. 171).

Wilkins and Bechtold quote the work of Van der Merve and Miller which "examined an 'induction crisis' in organizations whereby management does not effectively recognize the expectations, hopes, fears, and aspirations of the new employee by applying proper training and orientation procedures. The crisis occurs between the individual's anticipation of what the job will be like and the reality of the situation. As with other determinants, their non-recognition by management may well lead to job dissatisfaction and withdrawal behavior." (Wilkins and Bechtold, 1979, p. 22)

A significant relationship between turnover and dissatisfaction with the nature of the work has been found in independent studies on manual workers, production workers, computer salesmen, and student nurses (Porter and Steers, 1974 p. 162). Routine, boredom, and a lack of task variety are directly related to job dissatisfaction and turnover (Porter and Steers, 1974 p. 162; Jacobs and Retsky, 1975, pp. 13f). The industrial finding that turnover is related to repetitive, low skill level tasks has been generalized to the corrections field according to Brief et al (1976, p. 224) who characterize the job of guard as repetitive, low skill level due to excessive simplification, and alienation-producing. They cite status differentials and displacement, with custodial people philosophically and operationally separate from program people.

Perceived role clarity has been negatively correlated with



turnover among student nurses (Porter and Steers, 1974, pp. 163f). In the corrections setting, Jacobs and Retsky (1975, p.7) cite the "contradictory demands" (or responsibility for preventing escapes, riots, and the goal of rehabilitation) as a cause of tension. Pogrebin (1978, p. 152) finds the corrections officer in the treatment center "torn between incompatible expectations", while Brown et al (1971, pp.325ff) find that, in most correctional settings, professionals are faced with the fact that treatment functions are assigned clearly secondary importance. Finally, uncertainty and fear of assault have been identified as significant contributors to job dissatisfaction in the corrections field (Jacobs and Retsky, 1974, p. 22).

#### 4. Unionization

The relationship between unionization and alienation, job dissatisfaction, or turnover is almost entirely unexplored in the attrition literature. Where occasional references do exist, they suggest that some aspects of unionization alleviate turnover-inducing factors, aside from the expected influence of unionization on pay levels and other material benefits.

It has been established that the failure to get "expected wages" is a better predictor of the propensity to resign than is the amount of pay itself (Porter and Steers, 1974, p. 155). Telly et al (1971, pp.170ff) found that equity regarding pay and advancement was not a factor in high or low turnover for unionized organizations. As to why this is so, they suggest: "In effect, then, the data suggest that union contracts, or, of course, other constraining structures mentioned above, may minimize certain types of perceived inequities".

Feelings of powerlessness, lack of autonomy, and alienation make for work dissatisfaction. Unionization provides the worker with feelings of power and the ability to influence decision-making. The participation process leads to less alienation from work (Aiken and Hage, 1966, p. 503). "Union members...point with pride to high wages and benefits and the stamina required to perform their jobs. Researchers may see the same jobs as repetitive and boring" (O'Reilly and Caldwell, 1979, p. 163). "The advent of the union movement has served to strengthen the line officer in his position relative to higher-echelon guards", suggest Jacobs and Retsky; making the point that the guards' distance from the top echelon makes them feel powerless, like the inmates (Jacobs and Retsky, 1975, p. 12; p. 23). The impact of co-worker support in retention is pointed out by Farris (in Porter and Steers, 1974, p. 161).

This observations is echoed by the 1978 report on Prison Employee Unionism which quotes Carl Stenberg of the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (Wynne, 1978, pp. 49f): "At least eight factors have contributed to the growth and activism of public employee organizations, [one of which is] the inability of an individual worker in a large bureaucracy to be heard by his employers unless he speaks in a collective voice."

Given the presence, in the corrections field, of so many of the organizational and job characteristics which predispose to turnover (rule observation, job codification, role ambiguity, social distance, vulnerability to assault, etc.) it appears likely that the union provides not only material benefits but also the informal feedback, sharing of norms, social satisfaction, participation in decision-making, and power base to cope with these turnover-inducing forces, thereby lowering the turnover rate.

#### E. Conclusions

An examination of studies of correctional attrition, and attrition in related fields, reveals both conflicting findings as well as areas where further research and study is needed. The research design and overall focus of the current project attempts to fill two areas of need. The first is the need for findings which relate to actual institutional conditions and management practices, thus building upon the considerable research as to processes of attrition and attitudes of employees. The second is the need for attrition research to be formulated and applied so as to apply directly to real situations in explicit, measurable ways. Thus, a goal for the current project is to distill previous theoretical research, add new applied management research, and construct an empirically based set of recommendations and standards to guide future efforts to reduce employee attrition in correctional institutions.



## CHAPTER THREE

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF SURVEY FINDINGS

#### A. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the survey of institutional employee attrition. Two types of findings are presented: those which describe the existing situation in correctional institutions, and those findings which are specially characteristic of high- and low-attrition institutions. Thus, the first findings describe the problem, and the second findings point to the solutions.

Chapter Two reviews previous studies of attrition, placing these findings in perspective. Such studies include both those which are descriptive, and those which attempt to identify approaches to solving this problem. Chapter Four suggests specific action programs which can be implemented at institutions, including formulae which would assist planners and administrators in predicting the future benefits of alternative courses of action.

#### B. METHODOLOGICAL SUMMARY

The National Survey of Correctional Institution Employee Attrition has two distinct stages: the administration and interpretation of a survey of correctional institutions, and the development of plans to apply the major findings of the survey to five state correctional systems. The following general summary of the survey administration and analysis should provide a perspective for most readers, to aid in the interpretation of the findings which are presented below. The methodology for the

second stage of the project is discussed in Chapter Four.

There are two overall objectives of the survey project: to identify levels of attrition which existed in U.S. adult correctional institutions in 1979, and to identify features of institutions, including management and operational factors, associated with higher and lower rates of attrition. A survey was constructed which requested both descriptive data on levels of attrition, and information on operations and management, such as levels of security, personnel procedures, etc. A copy of the survey is included in the appendix of this report.

The survey was distributed to over 600 institutions, representing all adult post-trial felony correctional institutions listed in the Directory of the American Correctional Association with one type of exception. In states where over twenty-five institutions are operated, institutions of less than 100 prisoners were sampled, to avoid overrepresentation in the final results of those states with many smaller institutions, as opposed to few larger ones. The following table summarizes the relationship of the sample of respondents to major identifiable characteristics of correctional institutions, based upon data from the ACA Directory.

TABLE 3.01  
SUMMARY OF SAMPLING STATISTICS

TYPE OF INSTITUTION	FEMALE ONLY	WORK RELEASE	MALE PRISONS	TOTAL
ACTUAL # OF INSTS:	29	153	688	870
SAMPLE # OF INSTS:	16	32	131	179
SAMPLE AS % OF ACTUAL:	55	21	19	21

The findings which are presented below are usually self-explanatory. In descriptive tables, which present attrition rates for various types of institutions, the overall attrition rates and voluntary resignation rates are accurate estimates to within a tolerance of plus or minus three percent. The other categorical rates are accurate to within plus or minus two percent. The total rates are the averages of the actual reported rates as calculated from the institutional surveys. The categorical rates are derived by applying the proportions of the reported attrition transactions by category to the total rates. This procedure was applied because of incomplete categorical data provided by some institutions that nevertheless provided complete data on total transactions. In all, 192 institutions responded to the survey, but no more than 179 of the responses were used in subsequent statistical analysis due to errors and omissions in some responses.

The sample of institutions used for estimating the national attrition rates includes some institutions excluded from the sample used for the t-test comparisons. The additional institutions were not used in t-test comparisons whenever a

particular institution's survey response did not include one or more measures used in the t-test analysis. For example, an institution providing a complete response as to employee attrition rates would be included in the sample used to estimate national attrition rates. However, if that institution did not also provide salary information, then it could not be included in subsequent t-test comparisons of high-salary versus low-salary institutions. It appears from an examination of our data that higher attrition institutions may have had more missing data than low attrition institutions. As a result, the combined attrition rates for the samples used in the t-tests is often slightly lower than the rates in the overall descriptive presentation in Tables 1.01 and 3.03. In addition, the attrition rates of several institutions having attrition rates exceeding 100% (i.e. 150% to 200% in the case of some prisons, and some small work release centers) were recoded to 99% to avoid these institutions by themselves overinfluencing t-test results. This was done for the t-test samples because sometimes these samples consist of less than 60 institutions, and the inclusion of a handful of extremely high cases could, by itself, create significant results which would not be representative of the sample overall. This was not done in the overall rate sample because these institutions are valid examples of correctional employee attrition, and because the high rates are averaged into a sample of 162 cases. Had this procedure not been done, so that the extremely high attrition rate institutions would have been included at full value in the t-test samples, the effect would have been to increase the size of differences between groups, creating a larger number of significant findings. Thus, the procedure applied was methodologically conservative, reducing the possibility of non-representative findings.

Section E explores institutional characteristics associated with higher and lower attrition rates, based upon a static group comparison research design (Campbell and Stanley, 1963, pp. 8ff). In the tables in Section E, all of the institutions are divided, for each table, into two groups. The division is based upon whether the institution measures above or below a cutoff point on the institutional characteristic. Thus, attrition rates might be compared between institutions with high or low pay scales. In these tables, a probability is presented next to each comparison, which is developed by performing a statistical procedure called a t-test. The probability, expressed as a percentage, is the chance that the two averages are coincidental estimates of the same basic measurement, and that the difference is due to coincidence rather than an actual underlying condition. Thus, the higher the percentage, the greater the chance that the reported difference is not "real". Findings are reported in tables only if the probability of coincidental difference is less than one in ten, or ten percent. When the percentage reported is "0", which is often the case, then it is very likely that the difference reported in the table would exist if the survey could have measured all institutions in the United States. When comparisons are presented which illustrate no difference, the purpose is often to contrast this finding with a real difference elsewhere

in the table.

### C. DESCRIPTIVE FINDINGS

Attrition of employees is a complex phenomenon. A simple definition of attrition is: any personnel transaction which results in the vacancy of a previously filled position, including those where the position is immediately refilled, and those which result from promotions, disciplinary actions, retirements, and voluntary resignations. The following is a summary of the components of attrition:

**PROMOTIONS:** Some positions are resigned due to a generally favorable event, the promotion of the employee to a position of greater responsibility and compensation. In this survey, 16% of all vacancies occurred because of promotions. The highest level of promotions occurred within administrative positions, where 42% of all attrition was a result of the promotion of administrative employees to higher positions within administration. The lowest rates are for correctional officers where promotions accounted for about 11% of all vacancies. It is not surprising that the highest voluntary resignation rate occurs in the category of position which has the lowest promotion rate, and the lowest voluntary resignation rate occurs in the category of position where there is the highest promotion rate. This will be illustrated below when voluntary resignations are discussed.

**RETIREMENTS:** Positions become vacant because employees retire. This accounts for about 6% of all attrition. Approximately one sixth of these are due to job related disabilities.

**DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS:** Some vacancies are created as a result of the termination of employment for disciplinary reasons. These accounted for about 11% of all attrition. The highest rates of disciplinary attrition are for correctional officers. In this survey, disciplinary terminations per year are equal to over 4% of all CO positions. For administrative employees, these actions are equal to 1.8% of all positions, and for supervisory correctional officers, they are equal to 0.7% of all such positions.

**OTHER INVOLUNTARY TERMINATIONS:** This is a category which accounts for a variety of types of transactions, including deaths and layoffs. They account in our sample for 7% of all attrition.

**VOLUNTARY RESIGNATION:** This is the most frequent type of attrition, accounting for over 60% of all attrition. This category covers situations where an employee abandons a position by simply not showing up for work for a significant period of time, as well as situations where an employee quits to take a job he or she prefers. Voluntary resignation

is especially prevalent for correctional officers, where the number of resignations exceed 17% of all officer positions each year.

The following table illustrates the proportions of attrition rates for each type of employee, according to the type of transaction resulting in the position vacancy.

TABLE 3.02

PROPORTIONAL CONTRIBUTION TO ATTRITION  
OF TYPES OF PERSONNEL TRANSACTIONS

TYPE OF ATTRITION	ADMIN	SUPPT	C-OFF	SUPCO	PRGRM	TOTAL
Promotions	42%	14%	11%	39%	26%	16%
Retire/nondisability	6%	9%	4%	15%	2%	5%
Retire/disability	0%	4%	2%	2%	1%	1%
Disciplinary actions	9%	5%	13%	5%	6%	11%
Other invol. actions	6%	6%	7%	6%	9%	7%
Voluntary resignations	37%	62%	63%	33%	56%	60%
TOTAL ATTRITION	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

It is apparent that a conventional turnover rate actually describes very different phenomena for different types of positions. Administrative and supervisory positions are more likely to be vacated due to promotion, whereas a disciplinary action or a promotion are equally probable outcomes for a correctional officer.

The next table illustrates the attrition rates for five categories of positions, according to the reason for the attrition. The measures are "attrition rates" or "turnover rates", which are the number of transactions involving attrition, expressed as a percent of the number of positions authorized. Thus, for example, if an institution is authorized to employ 100 correctional officers, and there are 20 voluntary resignations during a year, then the voluntary attrition rate is 20%.

TABLE 3.03

CATEGORICAL ATTRITION RATES  
ALL INSTITUTIONS

TYPE OF ATTRITION	ADMIN	SUPPT	C-OFF	SUPCO	PRGRM	TOTAL
Promotions	8.4%	3.1%	3.1%	5.5%	4.6%	3.8%
Retire/nondisability	1.3%	2.0%	1.0%	2.0%	0.3%	1.2%
Retire/disability	0.0%	0.8%	0.5%	0.3%	0.2%	0.4%
Disciplinary actions	1.8%	1.2%	3.7%	0.7%	1.1%	2.8%
Other invol. actions	1.2%	1.2%	2.1%	0.9%	1.6%	1.6%
Voluntary resignations	7.3%	13.6%	17.5%	4.7%	10.2%	14.1%
TOTAL ATTRITION RATE	20.0%	21.9%	27.9%	14.1%	18.0%	23.9%

These figures represent the attrition rates of 162 institutions for the year 1979, including large and secure prisons, farms, and work release centers.

Attrition rates were calculated for various types of institutions, according to level of security and type of function. The analysis of employee attrition within work release institutions revealed a general rate which was different from all institutions in general at a statistically significant level (see Table 3.18).

D. COMPARISONS TO PREVIOUS STUDIES

Other literature on attrition was reviewed in the previous chapter. However, two studies which also attempted to determine attrition rates deserve mention at this point, because those findings can be considered in relation to the findings of this study.

One study, conducted by Corrections Magazine in 1976, identified a national average attrition rate for correctional officers of 27.9 percent. This figure was determined by calculating the average rate for 43 states. Each state reported its attrition rate as a single figure. An earlier study, published in 1965 by Walter A. Lunden, is entitled "The Prison Warden and the Custodial Staff". It reported an average turnover rate for correctional officers of 24.8 percent.

These findings compare closely to the finding of this survey of a national rate for correctional officers (both line and supervisory combined) of 24.5 percent. The difference between the Corrections magazine study and that of this survey could result from the way in which attrition was measured. Corrections Magazine reported a single statistic for each state, and the overall average is the mean for all states. In this survey, the statistic is the mean for all institutions, which would avoid over-weighting the results of small states with few institutions. The following table compares the findings of each of these studies as to region of the nation.

TABLE 3.04

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER ATTRITION RATES  
BY REGION FOR THREE STUDIES

REGION	JOHN JAY/CPM 1979	LUNDEN 1961	CORR. MAGAZINE 1975
Northeast	12.7	18.4	23.8
Mid Atlantic	12.1	14.5	10.3
South Atlantic	23.5	31.1	24.4
East S. Central	33.9	50.0	37.3
West S. Central	40.4	47.2	42.3
East N. Central	15.8	16.8	20.1
West N. Central	31.5	13.8	32.7
Mountain	35.0	28.4	33.1
Pacific	20.3	28.8	23.7
All states	24.5	24.8	27.9
Federal	20.5	--	--

Administrative attrition is also important. Overall, this survey identifies an attrition rate of administrative staff of 20%, although 8.4% (almost half) is due to promotions to higher positions within the same institution. The Lunden (1965) study cited above also reported an attrition rate for institutional wardens of 17.8% from 1906 through 1955. The estimate of federal institutional attrition is based upon only six institutions and therefore should be interpreted with caution.

The American Correctional Association provided information about the tenure and attrition of directors of state departments of correction. The following table illustrates the attrition rates for these positions:

TABLE 3.05

ATTRITION RATES FOR STATE CORRECTIONAL ADMINISTRATORS  
1976-1979

YEAR	#TURNOVERS	ATTRITION RATE
1976	13	26%
1977	14	18%
1978	18	36%
1979	17	34%

Of the fifty administrators in office during 1975, only seven were still in office by 1981. Of the fifty states, twenty-five had employed three or more persons as Director between 1975 and 1980, and ten had employed four or more. For all positions filled during the first half of 1980, the previous incumbent had held the position for less than an average of two years.

E. FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH HIGH AND LOW ATTRITION RATES

This project seeks to describe attrition, to begin to explain attrition, and to propose specific administrative actions which might reduce it. The purpose of the rest of this chapter is to begin the process of explanation by comparing attrition rates associated with various approaches to management or institutional conditions. In some instances, the findings are methodologically and practically convincing. In other instances, the findings suggest leads for further investigation. Finally, the lack of relationship in certain instances, while not conclusive, also merits consideration. This project cannot definitively prove that a particular management style or institutional characteristic "causes" attrition. However, the identification of management practices and institutional characteristics which are commonly associated with attrition provides direction for further effort.

The characteristics are classified into four groups: benefits and perceived benefits, supervisory style, management practices and job content, and unionization. Statistical findings will be presented which illustrate the importance of each of these.

1. BENEFITS AND PERCEIVED BENEFITS

Benefits are the remunerations received as compensation for employment. The primary benefit is money, but other compensations include pension contributions and other fringe benefits. Benefits can be divided into those which are long-term, such as pensions or future pay increases, and those which are short-term or immediate.

a) Short-term benefits

First, findings will be presented with reference to short term benefits, which are immediate compensations received for employment, primarily wages and salaries. The following statistics illustrate the importance of such compensation in determining attrition levels.

TABLE 3.06

ATTRITION RATES FOR INSTITUTIONS  
BY  
STARTING CORRECTIONAL OFFICER SALARIES

ATTRITION TYPE	GREATER OR EQUAL TO \$10,000 N=68	LESS THAN \$10,000 N=83	PROBABILITY OF COINCIDENTAL DIFFERENCE
Correctional officers:			
Voluntary resignation	13.2%	23.9%	0%
Total attrition	20.7%	31.3%	0%
All employees:			
Voluntary resignation	9.5%	17.3%	0%
Total attrition	17.1%	26.4%	0%

Average correctional officer starting pay is the starting salary for correctional officers in 1979. It is apparent that attrition rates are substantially higher in institutions with lower starting salaries. However, the value of a given salary differs depending upon prevailing wages and prices in the locality where an employee resides. The next analysis attempts to take this into consideration.

TABLE 3.07

ATTRITION RATES FOR INSTITUTIONS  
BY  
CORRECTIONAL OFFICER SALARIES  
AS A PERCENT OF STATE PER CAPITA INCOME

ATTRITION TYPE	GREATER OR EQUAL TO 150% N=32	LESS THAN 150% N=110	PROBABILITY OF COINCIDENTAL DIFFERENCE
Correctional officers:			
Voluntary resignation	9.6%	21.6%	0%
Total attrition	17.8%	28.6%	0%
All employees:			
Voluntary resignation	8.0%	15.6%	0%
Total attrition	16.1%	24.1%	0%

The purpose of this analysis was to explore whether salary levels, adjusted to reflect typical salary levels in a state, might reflect even more strongly the relation between salary levels and attrition rates. The table illustrates that attrition rates are much lower when salaries exceed 150% of state per capita income. However, the difference is not markedly greater than that obtained when raw salary levels are used.

Pay as a percent of state per capita income is based upon data provided by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis. The data is for the year 1978, while the salary data is for 1979. The purpose of the lagged measure is to adjust starting salaries for variations in typical salary levels in local areas. The reason for selecting these statistics is that agencies may attempt to use this measure as a guideline for salary requests. In any year, the per capita income data is usually one year old. Thus, by using the per capita income data on a lagged basis, the statistic can be calculated on a current basis. The average supervisory correctional officer starting salary is also for the year 1979.

TABLE 3.08

ATTRITION RATES FOR INSTITUTIONS  
BY  
SUPERVISORY CORRECTIONAL OFFICER STARTING SALARIES

ATTRITION TYPE	GREATER OR EQUAL TO \$13,000 N=62	LESS THAN \$13,000 N=87	PROBABILITY OF COINCIDENTAL DIFFERENCE
Correctional officers:			
Voluntary resignation	13.0%	22.3%	1%
Total attrition	21.3%	29.0%	2%
Supervisory officers:			
Voluntary resignation	1.7%	4.6%	8%
All employees:			
Voluntary resignation	9.4%	16.2%	0%
Total attrition	16.6%	24.9%	1%

Salary levels for supervisory officers seem to influence line officer attrition more than supervisory officer attrition. This observation is reinforced by the data on salary compression presented in the section on long-term benefits. However, attrition due to disciplinary actions for supervisory officers is higher under conditions of lower pay.

b) Long-term benefits

The next tables present findings as to long-term benefits, which are potential future benefits of current employment. These are of primarily two types: retirement benefits and future pay increases.



TABLE 3.09

ATTRITION RATES FOR INSTITUTIONS  
BY  
ESTIMATED ANNUAL RETIREMENT PLAN VALUE

ATTRITION TYPE	GREATER OR EQUAL TO \$1,300 N=51	LESS THAN \$1,300 N=37	PROBABILITY OF COINCIDENTAL DIFFERENCE
Support staff:			
Voluntary resignation	8.2%	17.3%	6%
Correctional officers:			
Voluntary resignation	12.2%	18.6%	5%
Total attrition	21.1%	28.8%	9%
All employees:			
Voluntary resignation	9.8%	13.7%	7%
Total attrition	18.0%	22.4%	15%

The annual retirement plan value is calculated by subtracting the minimum age to retire at 50% of salary from 77, which is an estimate of average life expectancy. This figure is multiplied by 50% of starting salary, and then divided by the number of years which must be worked to retire at 50% of salary. This is a very rough, usually low estimate of the value of a retirement plan to an employee on a current-year basis, not considering inflation or appreciation of contributions to the plan. The measure values more highly a plan which allows earlier retirement after fewer years of work.

TABLE 3.10

ATTRITION RATES FOR INSTITUTIONS  
BY  
MINIMUM AGE TO RETIRE AT 50% OF FINAL SALARY

ATTRITION TYPE	GREATER OR EQUAL TO 56 N=36	LESS THAN 56 N=68	PROBABILITY OF COINCIDENTAL DIFFERENCE
Administrative staff:			
Voluntary resignation	14.5%	5.2%	6%
Correctional officers:			
Voluntary resignation	23.7%	12.2%	0%
Total attrition	32.0%	20.6%	2%
All employees:			
Voluntary resignation	16.0%	9.2%	0%
Total attrition	29.1%	19.2%	0%

The minimum age to retire at 50% pay is the earliest retirement

age, assuming that the minimum number of years to reach retirement is also achieved. It appears that an early opportunity for retirement is a more important influence upon correctional officer attrition than attrition of administrative and support staff.

TABLE 3.11

ATTRITION RATES FOR INSTITUTIONS  
BY  
CORRECTIONAL OFFICER SALARY COMPRESSION

ATTRITION TYPE	GREATER OR EQUAL TO 122% N=52	LESS THAN 122% N=90	PROBABILITY OF COINCIDENTAL DIFFERENCE
Correctional officers:			
Voluntary resignation	14.8%	21.4%	3%
All employees:			
Voluntary resignation	11.3%	15.4%	5%
Total attrition	19.5%	24.3%	5%

Salary compression is the starting supervisory CO salary as a percent of the starting line CO salary. It reflects the future income which would result from a promotion. Some prison systems offer a high starting salary for beginning officers, but offer few pay incentives following initial employment. As was the case with supervisory officers salaries, compression appears to influence the behavior of line officers more than the supervisors themselves. An explanation might be that a future pay increase might be a significant incentive to a line officer. However, the supervisory officers would already have received the increase. Furthermore, those officers who would not be willing to accept a promotion at the prevailing salary would probably have resigned while they were officers or remained career line officers.

## 2. SUPERVISORY STYLE

Supervisory style refers to a broad range of characteristics of the relationship between a supervisor and employees. The major dimension of such a relationship which appears to influence correctional employee attrition involves a participatory style of management. This refers to the actual and perceived ability of an employee to influence important aspects of his or her environment. In this project, there were two measures of this factor: the extent to which officers participate in the selection of the posts to which they are assigned, and the extent to which they participate in the selection of the times when they are to work overtime. In most of the institutions where a high level of such influence occurred, the procedural mechanism was a bidding process involving seniority or other factors. The following tables illustrate these measures:

TABLE 3.12  
 ATTRITION RATES FOR INSTITUTIONS  
 BY  
 DEGREE OF OFFICER PARTICIPATION  
 IN POST SELECTION AND SHIFT ASSIGNMENT DECISIONS

ATTRITION TYPE	LESS PARTICIPATION N=96	GREATER PARTICIPATION N=57	PROBABILITY OF COINCIDENTAL DIFFERENCE
Administrative: Voluntary Resignation	6.1%	10.1%	NS
Support staff: Voluntary resignation	15.6%	7.8%	1%
Correctional officers: Voluntary resignation	22.2%	13.8%	0%
Total attrition	30.0%	21.2%	1%
Supervisory officers: Voluntary resignation	4.7%	1.5%	6%
Total attrition	14.0%	10.8%	NS
Program and Medical: Voluntary resignation	10.6%	6.3%	6%
All employees: Voluntary resignation	15.3%	10.1%	0%
Total attrition	22.7%	19.6%	NS

While the finding must be considered to be very tentative, the possible reverse direction of the differences for administrative staff suggests a possible "zero sum" situation, where greater participation by lower levels of employees decreases their attrition, while simultaneously increasing the attrition of the administrative staff who must cope with the increased difficulty of participative management.

TABLE 3.13  
 ATTRITION RATES FOR INSTITUTIONS  
 BY  
 DEGREE OF OFFICER PARTICIPATION  
 IN OVERTIME ASSIGNMENT DECISIONS

ATTRITION TYPE	LESS PARTICIPATION N=96	GREATER PARTICIPATION N=45	PROBABILITY OF COINCIDENTAL DIFFERENCE
Support staff: Voluntary resignation	14.6%	8.6%	6%
Correctional officers: Voluntary resignation	22.2%	14.0%	1%
Total attrition	29.8%	21.5%	2%
Supervisory officers: Voluntary resignation	5.8%	0.8%	1%
Total attrition	15.6%	8.8%	3%
Program and Medical: Voluntary resignation	10.4%	6.6%	9%
All employees: Voluntary resignation	15.5%	10.0%	1%
Total attrition	24.3%	18.0%	1%

One important aspect of a participatory style of management is that some degree of this can be achieved without cost in many institutions. It can create some administrative inconvenience, especially if implemented inflexibly or without provisions to assure a capacity to fulfill the requirements of a post.

### 3. MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND JOB CONTENT

Management practices include a variety of specific approaches to the management and operation of a correctional institution. There are literally hundreds of such approaches. In this project, we have attempted to operationalize these concepts, using many measures of employee relations, communication techniques, and administrative approaches. The findings have been somewhat limited, but still interesting.

TABLE 3.14  
ATTRITION RATES FOR INSTITUTIONS  
BY  
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL STAFF WHO ARE FEMALE

ATTRITION TYPE	GREATER OR EQUAL TO 23% N=51	LESS THAN 23% N=115	PROBABILITY OF COINCIDENTAL DIFFERENCE
Voluntary resignation:			5%
Correctional officers	22.1%	15.8%	1%
Total staff	17.6%	11.9%	
Total Attrition, all staff	27.7%	19.6%	10%

The proportion of female employees does not appear to influence the attrition of employees except for correctional officers, and all employees taken as a whole because correctional officers are a high proportion of the total.

The next tables cover a variety of measures of working conditions and goals within institutions. The following tables illustrate some of these measures.

TABLE 3.15  
ATTRITION RATES FOR INSTITUTIONS  
BY  
PERCENT OF PRISONERS WORKING IN PRISON INDUSTRIES

ATTRITION TYPE	GREATER OR EQUAL TO 15% N=57	LESS THAN 15% N=112	PROBABILITY OF COINCIDENTAL DIFFERENCE
Correctional officers:			10%
Voluntary resignation	15.0%	19.7%	1%
Total attrition	20.2%	27.9%	

This table illustrates the possible importance of role ambiguity and role conflict as suggested in several articles reviewed in the literature in the previous chapter. The portions of prisoners in prison industries is not associated with the attrition rates of any category of employee except correctional officers. It is possible that within institutions with high levels of productive prisoner activity, correctional officer roles are less ambivalent and more purposeful than in more inactive situations. It is also possible that this measure is also associated with other favorable work conditions which actually cause the lower attrition levels. Presumably, where higher levels of prison industry occur, greater degrees of control, classification, and investment in prison activity may also occur.

TABLE 3.16  
ATTRITION RATES FOR INSTITUTIONS  
BY  
PERCENT OF PRISONERS ASSIGNED TO  
EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

ATTRITION TYPE	GREATER OR EQUAL TO 28% N=56	LESS THAN 28% N=113	PROBABILITY OF COINCIDENTAL DIFFERENCE
Total attrition:			
Correctional officers	23.9%	25.7%	NS
Medical and program	18.9%	12.1%	3%
All employees	20.6%	22.6%	NS

This table suggests that program staff have higher attrition rates in institutions with more developed educational and vocational programs, and it suggests that their attrition rates occur inversely to those of other employees with respect to this factor.

Work release institutions were those with over 50% of the prisoner population assigned to a work release program. These institutions showed a higher attrition rate than institutions in general. The following is a tabulation of those rates:

TABLE 3.17  
CATEGORICAL ATTRITION RATES  
WORK RELEASE INSTITUTIONS

TYPE OF ATTRITION	ADMIN	SUPPT	C-OFF	SUPCO	PRGRM	TOTAL
Promotions	12.8%	5.1%	3.5%	8.0%	5.7%	4.7%
Retire/nondisability	0.2%	0.9%	0.7%	2.2%	0.0%	0.9%
Retire/disability	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%
Disciplinary actions	4.0%	1.5%	4.1%	0.8%	1.5%	4.0%
Other invol. actions	2.7%	0.2%	2.9%	3.4%	0.3%	1.7%
Voluntary resignations	5.1%	14.0%	22.0%	7.4%	16.6%	18.3%
TOTAL ATTRITION RATE	24.8%	21.8%	33.1%	22.0%	24.7%	29.7%

While all institutions have a total rate of 23.9%, work release centers have a rate of 29.7%. Of the 5.8% difference, 4% is due to a higher voluntary resignation rate. Attrition due to retirement is actually slightly lower.

The project has not identified a definitive set of reasons for this particular difference. However, there are several possible reasons. First, work release centers focus on the provision of employment to prisoners. As a result, employees will have a higher level of awareness of the market for their labor than workers in more closed institutions. It is hard to retain

correctional employees when prisoners whom they supervise obtain higher levels of compensation for work calling for comparable qualifications, time, and effort. A second reason is that work release centers are usually smaller institutions with fewer employees. Thus, the actions of a small number of employees can have a large impact on any statistic which is a percent of authorized employees.

TABLE 3.18

ATTRITION RATES FOR INSTITUTIONS  
BY  
PERCENT OF PRISONERS IN SINGLE OCCUPANCY CELLS

ATTRITION TYPE	GREATER OR EQUAL TO 50% N=64	LESS THAN 50% N=86	PROBABILITY OF COINCIDENTAL DIFFERENCE
Attrition, all employees	21.8%	25.6%	9%

This table suggests that attrition is lower in institutions which house prisoners predominantly in single cells.

Several factors associated with job content do not appear to be associated with levels of employee attrition. These are illustrated in the next several tables.

TABLE 3.19

ATTRITION RATES FOR INSTITUTIONS  
BY  
DEGREE OF INSTITUTIONAL CROWDING

ATTRITION TYPE	GREATER OR EQUAL TO 99% N=63	LESS THAN 99% N=106	PROBABILITY OF COINCIDENTAL DIFFERENCE
Correctional officers:			
Voluntary resignation	17.7%	18.3%	NS
Total attrition	23.0%	26.5%	NS
All employees:			
Voluntary resignation	14.7%	13.0%	NS
Total attrition	21.7%	22.2%	NS

Crowding was defined as the average daily population level expressed as a percentage of the institutional design capacity. Such a measure is highly subject to local variations in the interpretation of capacity and therefore may not be borne out in future research.

These findings might be interpreted in several ways. However, it is the opinion of the authors that some of these measures may, in part, reflect the actual and perceived professionalism of the

overall institutional environment. When physical conditions meet professional standards, when the prisoners are usefully employed, and when the public has a general respect for the institution, then employees tend to remain in their positions. The following Table further explores this observation.

TABLE 3.20

ATTRITION RATES FOR INSTITUTIONS  
BY  
PERCEIVED PUBLIC ATTITUDE

ATTRITION TYPE	LESS RESPECT N=88	GREATER RESPECT N=80	PROBABILITY OF COINCIDENTAL DIFFERENCE
All employees:			
Voluntary resignation	15.1%	12.1%	NS
Total attrition	23.9%	20.2%	NS

This finding should be interpreted with caution. The finding is based upon a question which asked the person completing the survey to estimate public attitudes towards correctional officers, on a seven point scale. The item was included at the suggestion of several administrators, who expressed the opinion that public attitudes were the key factor in employee attrition. It might be that these possible differences support that opinion. However, it is also possible that they merely reflect the bias of the persons completing the survey. In institutions with higher attrition rates, the management may have less respect for correctional officers, and this frustration may be projected upon the public by the person completing the survey. However, these differences clearly do not disprove the administrators' claim.

4. UNIONIZATION

Unionization is very strongly associated with low attrition rates. This is probably primarily due to the influence which unionization often has on levels of benefits, working conditions, and employee participation in and influence upon management. Thus, it is possible that the effects of these factors on attrition could be achieved without unionization. However, the findings suggest that unionization is a method to achieve lower attrition rates, regardless of whether the underlying mechanism of unionization's effect on attrition is direct or indirect. Furthermore, the fact that these factors (higher pay, etc.) are themselves correlated with unionization suggests that, their implementation as a means to reduce attrition is more difficult without unionization. The following are the categorical attrition rates of those institutions with over half of the employees in unions.

TABLE 3.21

CATEGORICAL ATTRITION RATES  
UNIONIZED INSTITUTIONS

TYPE OF ATTRITION	ADMIN	SUPPT	C-OFF	SUPCO	PRGRM	TOTAL
Promotions	8.6%	2.7%	3.3%	5.2%	2.6%	3.6%
Retire/nondisability	2.1%	2.7%	1.7%	2.4%	0.3%	1.7%
Retire/disability	0.0%	0.2%	0.5%	0.4%	0.0%	0.3%
Disciplinary actions	0.0%	0.7%	1.9%	0.6%	0.8%	1.2%
Other invol. actions	0.4%	1.0%	0.7%	0.6%	1.4%	0.8%
Voluntary resignations	5.7%	8.5%	12.1%	2.2%	8.7%	10.4%
TOTAL ATTRITION RATE	16.8%	15.7%	20.2%	11.4%	13.8%	18.0%

The next table provides the categorical attrition rates for institutions with low levels of unionization.

TABLE 3.22

CATEGORICAL ATTRITION RATES  
LOW-UNIONIZATION INSTITUTIONS

TYPE OF ATTRITION	ADMIN	SUPPT	C-OFF	SUPCO	PRGRM	TOTAL
Promotions	9.0%	3.1%	3.1%	5.8%	6.2%	3.9%
Retire/nondisability	0.8%	1.4%	0.6%	1.6%	0.3%	0.7%
Retire/disability	0.0%	0.1%	0.4%	0.2%	0.4%	0.7%
Disciplinary actions	2.1%	1.6%	5.1%	0.9%	1.2%	3.8%
Other invol. actions	1.7%	1.4%	2.9%	1.1%	1.7%	2.0%
Voluntary resignations	9.0%	17.3%	21.9%	6.8%	11.2%	16.9%
TOTAL ATTRITION RATE	22.6%	24.9%	34.0%	16.4%	21.0%	28.0%

There are striking differences in the levels of attrition between the unionized and non-unionized institutions. In each of the last three tables, all comparisons between total categories of employees (such as a comparison of total attrition for all employees in Table 3.22 to Table 3.23) are significant at the 1% level, meaning that the chances that the differences are coincidental are less than 1 in 100, with the exception of promotional attrition, which is at the 11% level, and disability retirement, which does not show a statistical difference.

The next table highlights some of the major differences in the previous tables.

TABLE 3.23

## CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH VS. LOW UNIONIZED INSTITUTIONS

MEASURE	HIGH UNIONIZATION (N=64)	LOW UNIONIZATION (N=87)
Voluntary resignation	10.4%	16.9%
Voluntary res. (CO's only)	12.1%	21.9%
Total attrition	18.0%	28.0%
Total attrition (CO's only)	20.2%	34.0%

The differences in attrition rates due to promotions should be interpreted with caution, because high attrition institutions tend to also have high promotion rates because of the attrition, and the difficulty of lateral recruitment. Thus, the higher promotion rates in the low unionized institutions may not be due to the level of unionization, but rather due to the level of attrition.

## F. GENERAL SUMMARY

Attrition of employees occurs in association with identifiable circumstances. Most often, these are circumstances which can be intentionally changed either by the management of correctional agencies, or by the elected officials who determine levels of appropriations and levels of compensation of employees.

It appears that overall benefit levels and unionization are the factors which are most closely associated with attrition, although it also appears that management can influence attrition through modifications of internal procedures. The next chapter illustrates how some of these findings can be applied, using the recommendations summarized in the introduction, to reduce attrition in correctional institutions.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### IMPLEMENTATION OF ATTRITION REDUCTION PROGRAMS

#### A. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate how state correctional systems might reduce employee attrition, through a concerted program of administrative actions in the context of legislative support. The chapter summarizes the basic recommendations which result from this study, and illustrates how they might be implemented in five very different state correctional systems: Arkansas, Michigan, Missouri, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

The states are selected to reflect a diversity of attrition levels, unionization, overall pay and compensation, and institutional types. The recommendations are based upon the findings of this study, as well as recommendations, standards, and findings drawn from elsewhere in the literature on this problem. It is necessary to draw on other studies because of the scope and complexity of the attrition problem. No one research project can address all of the important issues and problems.

#### B. Assessment of Attrition Rates in the Five States

None of the five participant states maintained systematic and complete records on employee attrition. As a result, data to reflect recent attrition rates had to be developed in a different manner for each state. However, the following statistics should be generally comparable between the participant states. In each

instance, the method of data collection is described.

#### 1. Arkansas -- 1980

Attrition statistics were gathered centrally by the Planning and Research staff of the administration, and represent all of the institutions in the system.

Arkansas has a very high employee attrition rate, especially for correctional officers. It has the highest rate for the five states for attrition due to disciplinary actions, and the highest rate for supervisory officer attrition.

TABLE 4.01  
EMPLOYEE ATTRITION RATES  
ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, 1980

TYPE OF ATTRITION	ADMIN	SUPPT	C-OFF	SUPCO	PRGRM	OTHER	TOTAL
Promotions	0.0%	12.3%	10.7%	9.3%	10.3%	0.0%	10.6%
Retire/nondisability	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Retire/disability	6.7%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%
Disciplinary actions	0.0%	3.6%	14.0%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	10.0%
Other invol. actions	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
Voluntary resignation	6.7%	13.0%	34.6%	16.3%	16.7%	0.0%	27.7%
TOTAL ATTRITION RATE	13.3%	29.0%	60.7%	27.9%	28.2%	0.0%	49.5%
# OF EMPLOYEES	15	138	534	43	78	0	808

#### 2. Michigan -- 1979

Michigan was unable to provide all requested attrition statistics according to the categories and definitions used in this project. The following is an estimate of the system wide rate based upon 1979 statistics provided by the following institutions: State House of Correction, Riverside Correctional Facility, State Prison of Southern Michigan, Reception and Guidance Center, and the Michigan Intensive Program Center.

Michigan has a very low overall employee attrition level. It has the lowest voluntary resignation rate, but also has a high retirement rate.

TABLE 4.02  
ESTIMATED EMPLOYEE ATTRITION RATES  
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, 1979

TYPE OF ATTRITION	ADMIN	SUPPT	C-OFF	SUPCO	PRGRM	OTHER	TOTAL
Promotions	0.5%	4.4%	8.8%	6.3%	0.7%	0.0%	5.1%
Retire/nondisability	1.6%	3.1%	2.6%	11.7%	1.7%	0.3%	2.6%
Retire/disability	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Disciplinary actions	0.0%	1.0%	1.2%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.8%
Other invol. actions	6.0%	3.8%	0.5%	0.0%	4.0%	0.3%	1.7%
Voluntary resignation	6.6%	10.9%	8.2%	0.8%	9.1%	1.6%	7.1%
TOTAL ATTRITION RATE	14.8%	23.2%	21.4%	18.8%	16.2%	2.1%	17.3%
# OF EMPLOYEES	183	293	1125	128	297	381	2407

### 3. Missouri -- 1979

Due to a recent reorganization in which Missouri corrections was separated from a "superagency" structure, the central office in Missouri also did not have any systemwide attrition statistics. The table presented below is based upon statistics for 1979 submitted by the following institutions: St. Mary's Honor Center, Ka-Cee Honor Center, Fordland Honor Camp, Renz Correctional Center, Missouri Intermediate Reformatory, State Correctional Prerelease Center, and Missouri Training Center for men.

Missouri has a relatively high attrition rate, due primarily to a high rate of correctional officer turnover. Our interviews suggest that the disciplinary attrition rates are higher than the figures show, because some voluntary resignations occur as an alternative to, or in anticipation of, disciplinary action. An interesting observation is that Missouri has the highest attrition rate for administrative employees, and is the only one of the five states in which the administrative attrition rate exceeds the general attrition rate.

TABLE 4.03  
ESTIMATED EMPLOYEE ATTRITION RATES  
MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, 1979

TYPE OF ATTRITION	ADMIN	SUPPT	C-OFF	SUPCO	PRGRM	OTHER	TOTAL
Promotions	31.3%	3.8%	2.2%	1.3%	1.9%	0.0%	3.6%
Retire/nondisability	0.0%	2.7%	2.2%	2.7%	1.9%	0.0%	2.1%
Retire/disability	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	1.3%	0.9%	0.0%	0.4%
Disciplinary actions	3.1%	1.1%	1.6%	1.3%	0.0%	2.9%	1.3%
Other invol. actions	9.4%	3.2%	2.5%	1.3%	5.6%	0.0%	3.2%
Voluntary resign.	25.0%	20.5%	30.9%	5.3%	12.0%	5.7%	21.7%
TOTAL ATTRITION RATE	68.8%	31.4%	39.7%	13.3%	22.2%	8.6%	32.3%
# OF EMPLOYEES	32	185	317	75	108	35	752

### 4. South Carolina -- 1979

South Carolina maintains thorough statistics on employee attrition transactions, but was unable to provide a breakdown of total numbers of employed personnel for each of the subcategories requested. The total numbers of employed persons were therefore estimated using the total number of employees reported by the agency, divided into subcategories according to the proportions reported by institutions responding to the 1979 national survey.

TABLE 4.04  
ESTIMATED EMPLOYEE ATTRITION RATES  
SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, 1979

TYPE OF ATTRITION	ADMIN	SUPPT	C-OFF	SUPCO	PRGRM	OTHER	TOTAL
Promotions	9.8%	5.7%	2.8%	6.9%	3.9%	0.0%	4.0%
Retire/nondisability	0.0%	3.8%	0.2%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.4%
Retire/disability	0.0%	0.6%	0.3%	0.5%	0.4%	0.0%	0.3%
Disciplinary actions	0.0%	2.5%	3.1%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	2.3%
Other invol. actions	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	0.0%	0.3%
Voluntary resignation	7.5%	10.2%	10.7%	7.4%	16.7%	0.0%	10.8%
TOTAL ATTRITION RATE	17.3%	22.9%	17.0%	14.8%	24.5%	0.0%	18.0%
# OF EMPLOYEES	173	157	1526	216	257	11	2340

### 5. Tennessee -- 1979

Tennessee has a serious attrition problem, especially in the correctional officer position. Some of the resignation rate of administrative employees results from a change in state administration in 1979, including some cross-institutional transfers of administrative employees.

TABLE 4.05  
ESTIMATED EMPLOYEE ATTRITION RATES  
TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, 1979

TYPE OF ATTRITION	ADMIN	SUPPT	C-OFF	SUPCO	PRGRM	OTHER	TOTAL
Promotions	11.7%	2.2%	1.6%	7.6%	3.2%	0.0%	3.3%
Retire/nondisability	0.0%	0.2%	1.4%	1.3%	0.5%	0.0%	1.0%
Retire/disability	0.0%	0.5%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
Disciplinary actions	1.1%	3.9%	12.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.8%
Other invol. actions	0.0%	1.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%
Voluntary resignation	13.8%	13.0%	29.7%	3.4%	19.7%	0.0%	22.0%
TOTAL ATTRITION RATE	26.6%	22.2%	46.7%	13.0%	24.5%	0.0%	35.3%
# OF EMPLOYEES	94	414	1160	238	188	0	2094

### 6. Summary and Comparison

The following is a somewhat simplified illustration of the overall attrition levels in each state as compared to the national average figures presented earlier in this report. A "H"

means that the measure of attrition for all employee categories combined was at least 30% greater than the national average figures. An "L" means that the measure was not greater than 80% of the national average, and a "-" means that the measure fell between the ranges.

TABLE 4.06  
COMPARATIVE SUMMARY OF ATTRITION RATES

TYPE OF ATTRITION	STATE CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM				
	ARK.	MICH.	MO.	S. CAROL.	TENN.
Promotions	H	H	-	-	-
Retire/nondisability	L	H	H	L	-
Retire/disability	H	L	-	L	L
Disciplinary actions	H	L	L	-	H
Other invol. actions	L	-	H	L	L
Voluntary resignation	H	L	H	L	H
TOTAL ATTRITION RATE	H	L	H	L	H

This profile suggests that Michigan and South Carolina, on the whole, have relatively low attrition rates, while the other states have higher ones. Each state, however, has institutions which do not follow the overall pattern, such as Central Correctional Institution in South Carolina which has a very high attrition rate.

Another approach to the analysis of the attrition rates is to combine several components of the total attrition rate which seem to be the most problematic. Promotions and retirements cannot be considered necessarily desirable or undesirable. A "Problem Attrition" measure was constructed which is the sum of the disciplinary, voluntary, and other rates. This measure targets the types of attrition which most agencies strive to minimize.

TABLE 4.07  
PROBLEM ATTRITION RATES (DISCIPLINARY AND  
OTHER INVOLUNTARY ACTIONS, AND VOLUNTARY RESIGNATIONS)

STATE	ADMIN	SUPPT	C-OFF	SUPCO	PRGRM	OTHER	TOTAL
Arkansas	6.7%	16.6%	49.0%	18.6%	18.0%	0.0%	38.1%
Michigan	6.6%	15.7%	9.9%	0.8%	13.8%	1.9%	9.6%
Missouri	37.5%	24.8%	35.0%	7.9%	17.6%	8.6%	26.2%
South Carolina	7.5%	12.7%	13.8%	7.4%	19.8%	0.0%	13.4%
Tennessee	14.9%	17.9%	43.3%	3.4%	19.9%	0.0%	30.4%

Because the problem attrition measure is a large component of the overall attrition rates, the identification of high and low attrition states in Table 4.06 is consistent with an identification which could be developed based upon Table 4.07.

### C. Review and Analysis of Recommendations

The following are reviews of each recommendation developed previously in this report, along with evaluations of the current level of performance of each state in each area, and suggested courses of action to implement each recommendation.

It is important to note that the majority of these recommendations cannot be completely implemented through administrative action by each agency involved. A cooperative and supportive effort by the agency, the state personnel agencies, and the Governor's Office and Legislatures is necessary. However, the recommendations can serve as a guide to concerted action.

#### 1. Management Planning to Reduce Attrition

Each agency should develop a concise plan of administrative actions and legislative recommendations to achieve reductions in employee attrition rates. The plan should incorporate the statistical reporting called for in Recommendation Number Two, as well as adoption of some or all of the other recommendations below, and a schedule of activities to implement the adopted recommendations.

In interviews with officials from each state, all indicated that attrition was a critical problem in one or more institutions, but none of the systems had an organized and concerted plan in place to remedy the high levels of employee turnover. In general, officials interviewed agreed that having a plan was a good idea. One Tennessee official, noting that other management plans tend to take precedence over the less clearly defined attrition reduction goals of the agency, welcomed this recommendation as calling attention to the attrition problem. However, while also agreeing with the desirability of having an attrition reduction plan, a Missouri official pointed out that support from top management is a necessary prerequisite because to develop a plan requires staff and time.

There were significant efforts underway in each state in practically all areas of compensation, training, career ladders, and related problems, but these did not appear to be directly targeted to achieve attrition rate reductions. Several exceptions are Michigan's pro-active and well-planned efforts to reward longevity. Arkansas took action in 1981 to upgrade salaries, using attrition as one supporting argument. Currently, South Carolina is focusing upon the employee selection process: developing medical criteria, providing for some psychological screening, and improving recruitment and background investigation efforts.

Based upon discussions with officials in each agency, the following procedure has been identified for the development of an action-plan to reduce employee attrition.

#### 1. Identify target attrition rates: A basic problem for

most agencies is the lack of consensus as to an acceptable level of attrition. Because attrition is general considered to be undesirable, few agencies and officials wish to endorse a specific level of it. However, most officials agree that some level of attrition is absolutely necessary, and even desirable. Without positions opening up, new leadership is not developed and applied to problems, and an agency can tend to stagnate. Among the officials interviewed, there was a consensus that a target of 15% would be acceptable, not including promotions or retirements.

2. Identify locations and jobs wherein attrition exceeds the target rates: A simple method is to develop the type of statistical table used to describe attrition earlier in this chapter -- Tables 4.01 through 4.05, but for each institution or work location, as well as for the system as a whole. Wherever the "Total Attrition Rate" exceeds the target rate, a possible problem area has been identified.

3. Select specific problem areas for priority attention: Each agency will express different concerns in the selection of priority problem areas. Some decisions may be based upon the importance of a specific category of work to an agency's overall mission. For example, an agency under a court order to improve medical care may place high priority on a comparatively low attrition rate among a few medical employees. Most agencies would be concerned with locations and jobs where the depth (the extent to which the attrition rate exceeds 15%) and the scope (the number of employees affected) is greatest. In most cases, these criteria would call for attention to line correctional officers.

4. Identify the type of action required for each priority group: One method to identify sources of problems is to examine the components of the attrition problem itself. Using the tables developed in step two, the component rates can be examined to suggest sources. For example, a high voluntary resignation rate might suggest problems with pay and working conditions, while a high disciplinary attrition rate would suggest additional problems with employee selection, training, and supervision. A second method involves the assessment for each priority group of the state of compliance with respect to the basic practices discussed in Chapter Three, and the basic recommendations proposed later in this Chapter. Where large gaps are found between the recommended and existing practices, then potential sources of employee attrition exist.

5. Plan and implement recommended actions: The most difficult step is to select specific corrective actions, and to achieve implementation of those actions. Often this requires action from outside of the agency, such as the authorization and funding of pay increases by the legislature. However, much can be done through

administrative action at the levels of the central administration of an agency, and within the institutions.

6. Develop a process to monitor implementation, and to assess results: It is especially important that corrective actions are implemented, and that attrition rates are monitored over time. An evaluative process will identify corrective actions which are not working, and will highlight success in attrition reduction.

The resulting plan need not be lengthy and tedious, but it should help to build a consensus about the attrition problem, and it should help to coordinate necessary corrective actions throughout an agency.

## 2. Improved Assessment of Attrition

All state correctional agencies should develop procedures for gathering, at least annually, information on attrition in correctional agencies and institutions. The problem of attrition cannot be systematically resolved until it is measured on an ongoing basis, to permit identification of problem areas for each agency, and to assess progress in resolving the problems.

Although the five states visited reveal a great variation in record-keeping on attrition, none is fully satisfied with its present capacity to analyze turnover figures. The Missouri Department of Corrections has no records on employee attrition, or any record-keeping system, due to a series of reorganizations of state government in which Corrections was first combined with a social services superagency in the mid-1970's, and then separated back again as an independent agency. In these processes, personnel records were either not maintained, lost, or rendered unavailable. Thus, Missouri is presently able to initiate a records system unfettered by past practice. However, the current level of staffing of the central administration may limit the extent to which a fully adequate system can be developed. Arkansas maintains a paper system, including a "reason for leaving" when an employee separates from the agency. However, systematic analysis of these data is limited because the answers are not always consistent in form, and because computerization is not an immediate prospect. South Carolina maintains an excellent central record system. Officials explain that their major current problem is to develop methods to enable individual managers to use the information with respect to specific types of employees and locations. Like South Carolina, both Michigan and Tennessee maintain central records on a manual basis as well as by computer. They also perceive the need for management reporting systems which would aid individual managers to deal with attrition and other personnel problems within their own agencies.

Most officials interviewed indicated that the key problem in the assessment of attrition was the identification of useful management reports which could stimulate, inform, and monitor

corrective action by managers at every level of the agency. Several criteria for such a reporting system were suggested:

The management reports should not be too lengthy, or too complex. Most administrators and middle-managers already have too much paperwork as it is. Thus, an effective report system should immediately report key data in a simple and relevant format.

The reports should target management responsibility. Summary statistics on overall agency performance are interesting, but managers cannot usually act on such data. Instead, statistics on areas under the managers direct responsibility are most desirable.

The reports should be ongoing, so that progress over time can be monitored. Attrition is a continuing problem, and factors leading to higher rates constantly change.

While computerization is desirable, it should not be necessary to maintain records on a computer system to provide the needed management support. If possible, a microcomputer program should be made available for those agencies possessing such equipment, to maintain the statistics and to produce the reports.

As a result of these suggestions, the authors have attempted to identify the key information of use in the analysis and management of the employee attrition problem, organized in a one-page format which could be generated for the agency as a whole, or for specific subdivisions or areas of management responsibility. The following is a hypothetical mockup of such a report.

EMPLOYEE ATTRITION MANAGEMENT REPORT, THROUGH JUNE 1980  
UNIT NUMBER 1, ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

	ACTUAL SEPARATIONS	ANNUALIZED ATTR. RATE	GOAL RATE	LAST YEAR
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEES (15)</b>				
Promotions	0	0.0	--	13.3
Retirement	1	6.7	--	0.0
Disciplinary actions	0	0.0		0.0
Other invol. actions	0	0.0		0.0
Voluntary resignation	1	6.7		0.0
TOTAL ATTRITION RATE	2	13.3	15.0	13.3
<b>SUPPORT EMPLOYEES (138)</b>				
Promotions	17	12.3	--	7.3
Retirement	0	0.0	--	1.5
Disciplinary actions	5	3.6		5.1
Other invol. actions	0	0.0		0.1
Voluntary resignation	18	13.0		18.2
TOTAL ATTRITION RATE	40	29.0	15.0	32.6
<b>CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS (534)</b>				
Promotions	57	10.7	--	7.8
Retirement	5	0.9	--	0.6
Disciplinary actions	75	14.0		29.2
Other invol. actions	2	0.4		0.2
Voluntary resignation	185	34.6		25.1
TOTAL ATTRITION RATE	324	60.7	15.0	62.7
<b>SUPERVISORY OFFICERS (43)</b>				
Promotions	4	9.3	--	4.7
Retirement	0	0.0	--	0.0
Disciplinary actions	0	0.0		2.3
Other invol. actions	1	2.3		2.3
Voluntary resignation	7	16.3		9.3
TOTAL ATTRITION RATE	12	27.9	15.0	18.6
<b>PROGRAM/MEDICAL EMPLOYEES (78)</b>				
Promotions	8	10.3	--	3.9
Retirement	0	0.0	--	0.0
Disciplinary actions	1	1.3		1.3
Other invol. actions	0	0.0		0.0
Voluntary resignation	13	16.7		14.1
TOTAL ATTRITION RATE	22	28.2	15.0	19.2
<b>ALL EMPLOYEES (808)</b>				
Promotions	86	10.6	--	17.2
Retirement	6	0.7	--	0.6
Disciplinary actions	81	10.0		20.4
Other invol. actions	3	0.4		0.4
Voluntary resignation	224	27.7		21.7
TOTAL ATTRITION RATE	400	49.5	15.0	50.3



This report can be created manually, either by central office staff to be distributed to organizational units, or by unit staff as a routine report to management. In either instance, reports would be developed for each organization unit (usually for each institution and for the central office), and then a summary report would be developed for the entire agency. Thus, for the Arkansas Department of Corrections as an example, the following reports would be developed:

1. Central Administration
2. Cummins Unit
3. Tucker Unit
4. Women's Unit
5. Benton Center
6. Blytheville Center
7. Livestock Production Center
8. Departmental Summary

Several of these reports might be combined. The Central Administration report would cover only the actual positions assigned to the central office, while the Departmental Summary, which is the basis for the mock-up above, would cover all employees of the Department.

The report breaks down attrition statistics by type of attrition and type of employee. For each category of employee, the number of positions is shown. Then, in the first column of data, the number of separations to date for the reporting year are shown. In the second column, an annualized attrition rate is shown. If the separations are reported for the full year, the rate is merely the number of separations expressed as a percent of the number of employees. Thus, 57 promotions is 10.7% of 534 correctional officers. If the data is reported for part of a year, then each percentage should be divided by the number of months for which data is reported, and multiplied by twelve. In the third column, the goal attrition rate is presented, which may be the same for all categories of employees and for the entire agency, or it may vary. For example, the agency may set these rates at 90% of the previous year's rate, unless that rate is equal to or below the target rate set by the agency, such as 15%. In defining the goal rates, it should be decided whether the target rate includes attrition due to retirement and promotion. Finally, as a point of reference, the attrition rates for the previous year are also presented.

Gathering the information can be very simple. In a small agency or institution, one approach is to copy twelve blanks of the report, one for each month of the year. Then, when an employee separates from the agency, mark the sheet at the appropriate row of the separations column, and note on the back of the sheet some identifying data about the employee. Then, when it is time to prepare the report, all of the necessary information should be available. It may be necessary to leave the fourth column blank (the previous year rates) if they are not known, but this would be necessary for only the first year.

Larger and more sophisticated agencies may find it efficient and practical to integrate attrition reporting, and report generation, into a larger computer-based or manual record system.

### 3. Adequate and Sufficient Salaries

Starting salaries for correctional officers on a statewide basis should be not less than 150% of the state per capita income for the previous year, as reported by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

This is necessary because salaries are very highly associated with attrition. In this project, institutions with starting salaries for correctional officers of less than \$10,000 in 1978-1979 has total attrition rates for correctional officers of 31%, while those paying \$10,000 or more has average rates of 21%. Likewise, institutions with starting salaries for correctional officers of less than 150% of state capita income for the previous year experienced attrition rates which averaged 24%, as compared to 16% when the salary was greater than 150% of state per capita income. Previous studies, such as the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, have recommended salary parity with law enforcement agencies, and the American Correctional Association Commission on Accreditation has recommended general comparability with private sector salaries, based upon periodic surveys.

The pay comparability option: The identification of a salary level which meets a comparability standard is a complex process, especially in states where there is great variability in law enforcement salaries from locality to locality. Although this report does not adopt a comparability standard for reasons which will be explained below, because several states have taken this approach with mixed results, the following is a recommended procedure for making such a determination for a state correctional system.

1. Identify those institutions, starting with the one with the highest number of employees, which employ 70% of the institutional workforce of the subject correctional system.
2. Add up the total number of employees for the institutions identified in step one, and calculate the percentage of that total represented by the number of employees at each institution.
3. For each institution, identify the starting salary for a Sheriff's Deputy, and for a starting police officer in the largest agency within 35 miles of the institution. When an area is served only by a Sheriff's Department, the starting salary for a deputy sheriff is counted as both the "police" and the "sheriff" figure.
4. For each institution, calculate the average of the deputy

salary, the police officer salary, and the starting salary of a state trooper or highway patrol officer. (Add the three salaries and divide by three.)

5. For each institution, multiply the salary average from step four by the percentage from step two, and add these for all of the institutions identified in step one.
6. Divide the total from step five by 100. This is the recommended salary for a starting correctional officer for this state correctional system.
7. Multiply the salary from step six by 1.30, which results in the recommended starting salary for a second level supervisor, often called a lieutenant, and the starting salary for professional positions requiring a college degree, such as a case manager or classification officer, or probation officer.

The following tables illustrate this process for two of the states included within this study.

TABLE 4.08  
Calculation of Law Enforcement Parity Salary  
State of Michigan

Institution	#emp	Cum%	Adj%	Salaries:			Average
				Police	Sheriff	Trooper	
Jackson	1345	33%	43%	18569	13955	17706	16743
Riverside/Ionia	455	44%	15%	14460	14108	17706	15425
Reform'ty/Ionia	382	53%	12%	14460	14108	17706	15425
Marquette	352	62%	11%	15048	15787	17706	16180
Cassidy Lake	300	69%	10%	6300	16404	17706	13470
Kinross	275	76%	9%	12430	12430	17706	14189
Recommended salary (weighted average)							15768
Current correctional officer starting salary							14094
Current as percent of recommended							89%

TABLE 4.09  
Calculation of Law Enforcement Parity Salary  
State of Missouri

Institution	#emp	Cum%	Adj%	Salaries:			Average
				Police	Sheriff	Trooper	
MSP/Jeff. City	600	39%	55%	12384	12420	14832	13212
MCTC/Moberly	280	57%	26%	10379	12600	14832	12604
MIR/Jeff. City	200	70%	19%	12384	12420	14832	13212
Recommended salary (weighted average)							13054
Current correctional officer starting salary							10632
Current as a percent of recommended							81%

There are several reasons for the decision not to adopt a salary standard of pay comparability with law enforcement.

First, a measure of pay comparability was constructed from the survey data, expressing the correctional officer salary as a percent of the law enforcement salary for the largest police agency within 30 miles. This measure was not different for high and low attrition institutions, even though there were strong differences when absolute salary was used, or salary as a percent of the previous year state per capita income. It appeared to the authors that the comparability statistic was an invalid measure.

Second, the construction of a practical index, such as that suggested in the steps above, can lead to various results depending upon the construction of the measure itself. If an index gives the local law enforcement salary a high weight, then systems with many urban institutions are favored due to the relatively higher law enforcement salaries. If the state trooper salary is used, this favors some systems with a great deal of rural capacity, since troopers are usually paid much more than rural sheriff's deputies. Thus, the construction of the index becomes arbitrary and political.

Third, practical experience has not been favorable. Arkansas found, for example, that a comparability index is not much different in result than the per capita index.

Finally, there are basic problems with linking corrections to law enforcement. In Tennessee, for example, a person who qualifies as a correctional officer may not qualify for a position as a state trooper. As a result, the state personnel agency which bases pay decisions to a great extent upon qualifications, would have operational difficulties with comparability. In Arkansas, the Department has sought detachment from the state civil service system as to the determination of personnel compensation, because of over reliance upon qualifications and experience in pay determination, without adequate consideration of work content factors in corrections. In Michigan, on the other hand, the State Compensation Board recommended in 1981 that all state employees receive a 7% pay increase, with the exception of correctional personnel, who were recommended to receive a 12% increase.

The recommended option: Instead of a system based upon comparability to law enforcement salaries, a system based upon a state's per capita personal income was selected. This system recommends a starting correctional officer salary at a level not less than 150% of the state per capita income for the previous year. Thus, if the per capita income for a state during 1980 was \$10,000, then the recommended correctional officer salary for 1981 would be \$15,000. This system has been selected for the following reasons:

It is relatively simple to calculate, as the per capita income data is routinely published by the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis, and is republished in a variety of sources including Almanacs and state statistical handbooks.

The measure rises as incomes rise in general, and reflect, albeit on a lagged basis, changes in economic conditions within and between states.

The standard is supported in the survey findings in this report. In the analysis presented, institutions paying greater than 150% of per capita income had attrition rates averaging 16%, while those paying less than 150% had attrition rates of 24%. The average ratio was 122%, but the higher standard of 150% was selected because the effect was greater as the differential increased. In addition, since attrition rates in typical institutions are unacceptably high, recommendation of the average compensation ratios would probably lead to unacceptably high rates as well. Since the goal of this project is to reduce attrition, a higher level was selected.

The previous year was selected as a base for the per capita income (both for the research and the recommendation) because current data on incomes is not available, and the most up to date information available is usually one year old.

The following are the recommended salaries for the five states, calculated for the year 1981.

TABLE 4.10

RECOMMENDED STARTING CORRECTIONAL OFFICER SALARIES, 1981

STATE	PER CAPITA INCOME, 1980	RECOMMENDED SALARY	CURRENT SALARY
Arkansas	7,268	10,902	10,790
Michigan	9,950	14,925	14,094
Missouri	8,982	13,473	10,632
South Carolina	7,266	10,899	10,507
Tennessee	7,720	11,580	10,296

No state in the study meets the standard, although several come very close. The greatest deficiencies are in Missouri and Tennessee.

4. Salary Decompression

Starting salaries for supervisory officers and for entry level professional positions (planners, case managers, probation officers, etc.) should not be less than 130% of the starting

salary for correctional officers. This will permit starting salaries for supervisory correctional officers to offer an appropriate reward and incentive for the responsibilities and obligations of supervision. This project found that higher salaries for supervisory officers are associated with lower attrition for both supervisory and line correctional officers.

In reviewing a draft summary of recommendations, officials in each of the cooperating states welcomed this proposal, because of its potentially favorable impact upon the problems of recruitment and especially promotion. South Carolina and Tennessee officials stressed the importance of visible and rewarding promotional opportunities in recruiting at all levels. In Michigan and Arkansas, officials also stressed the importance of promotional rewards to encourage workers to assume responsibility. In Michigan, an interesting example of this problem involves differences in eligibility for overtime pay. A lieutenant earns overtime, but a captain cannot. Both ranks work roughly equivalent amounts of overtime, but, due to the difference in eligibility for overtime, the lieutenant's pay with overtime roughly equals the captain's pay without overtime. This creates an obvious problem in attracting lieutenants to become captains.

In Tennessee and Arkansas, recent upward corrections of line officer salaries were not accompanied by comparable corrections of supervisor salaries. This caused resentment among supervisors, and in Arkansas several Wardens reported cases of officers turning down promotions due to lack of adequate compensation for the added responsibility. A comparable situation occurred in Oklahoma in 1979, when the Legislature passed a minimum salary for line correctional officers roughly equal to the compensation of lieutenants.

One concern about the recommendation is the possibility that it might be misconstrued as applying solely to supervisory officers. The intent of the recommendation is to establish several benchmarks to assess the degree of compression of an entire pay structure. The underlying assumption is that once the supervisory officer and entry professional salary is established, the remainder of the pay structure would be adjusted as well.

The level of these salaries is calculated using the recommended correctional officer salary as a base, and then multiplying it by 1.30. The following table illustrates current and proposed salaries for second line correctional supervisors and for case managers.

TABLE 4.13  
RECOMMENDED SALARIES FOR SELECTED SUPERVISORY  
AND PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

STATE	2ND LINE SUPERVISOR		CASE MANAGER	
	CURRENT	PROPOSED	CURRENT	PROPOSED
Arkansas	13,936	14,173	10,790	14,173
Michigan	21,778	19,403	23,114	19,403
Missouri	12,516	17,505	13,632	17,505
South Carolina	13,293	14,469	11,363	14,169
Tennessee	13,152	15,504	10,728	15,504

As in the case for line officer salaries, the states of Missouri and Tennessee have the greatest supervisory salary deficiencies. Case manager salaries are further out of line with the recommendations. In the case of Michigan, the recommended salary is less than the current one. This reflects the career ladder system which exists in Michigan, and is thus the recommendation is not entirely applicable. The recommendation, in any case, calls for a salary not less than 130% of the correctional officer starting salary. The higher salaries in Michigan, reflecting the greater number of intermediate positions between the line officer and the second line supervisor or professional position is not inconsistent with the recommendation.

#### 5. Participation in Post and Shift Selection

Each agency or institution should develop a written procedure providing the opportunity for correctional officers and other appropriate employees, after two years of service, to participate in the selection of the posts and shifts they will work, as well as their assignment to overtime. Prior to two years of service, post and shift assignments should be made on the basis of training and orientation requirements.

In general, methods of assignment of correctional officers to posts, shifts, overtime work, and leave which involve those officers in the decisions appear to be significantly associated with lower levels of attrition. Presumably, this is because 1) such participatory systems allow employees to progress towards working in the jobs they prefer at the times they prefer, 2) participatory systems provide patterns for cooperation between workers and supervisors in general decisionmaking, and 3) such systems provide incentives for longevity.

The recommendation does not explicitly require a formal bidding system, but rather supports a range of approaches to increased participation, each of which is described below. The recommendation received a mixed reaction from the cooperating states, including enthusiastic support and "200% opposition". The reservations about such systems were as follows:

Assignments must be based primarily upon organizational needs and policies. A participatory system can lead to

suboptimized assignments of personnel.

The practice of rotating employees has special benefits, both because it creates a workforce which is familiar with a broad range of the operations of the institution, and because it keeps the workforce "fresh" by exposing them to new challenges and situations.

Many institutions are too small, or too understaffed to meaningfully respond to worker preferences once solicited. Would it not create bad morale to build an expectation which cannot be fulfilled?

Within the framework of basic organizational requirements, several systems have developed reasonably successful approaches. In Arkansas, at the Women's Unit employees can express preferences as to work assignments, and these are accommodated as often as possible. However, in the larger units for men, the critical lack of staffing makes it very difficult to consider worker preferences. Rather, supervisors attempt to spread inconvenience equitably in their efforts to assure that critical posts are staffed. Recently, some additional officers have been authorized and a new shift structure has been adopted at the Cummins Unit on an experimental basis, using two 12-hour shifts rather than three 8-hour shifts. These changes may improve Arkansas's situation. In South Carolina, shift openings are announced at most institutions, and employees can apply for them. The final decision is based upon employee skills and experience, but preference is considered when all other factors are equal. Michigan has a bidding system which begins upon hiring, as there is no two-year waiting period. However, less than one-half of the correction officer posts are included in the system, so that a de-facto waiting period exists anyway. Several states suggested that assignment procedures be written and explicit to assure the appearance of fairness. Other states were concerned about the loss of management control of critical assignments.

It is important to anticipate that seniority-based bidding procedures can create attrition of recently hired workers by relegating new employees to the least desirable posts and shifts until they gain seniority. To avoid this, the recommendation of this report includes a two-year waiting period, during which employees are assigned to posts and shifts according to a system of orientation and training, using a selection of posts and shifts which are generally representative of all within the institution.

There are a range of ways in which increased participation can be achieved, and the specific method chosen should reflect the circumstances of each institution. The following are some suggestions:

In smaller institutions with limited staffing levels, supervisors responsible for post and shift assignments should set up methods for employees to routinely communicate



their preferences as to assignments, and efforts should be made to fulfill these preferences whenever possible. Assignments which are generally considered undesirable should be rotated if possible, and should be subject to additional incentives and bonuses as suggested in Recommendation Eight below.

In larger institutions with larger numbers of employees, formal assignment bidding systems can be established, allowing employees to choose their posts and shifts according to seniority.

A gradation in between these two alternatives can be achieved by limiting the scope of the bidding system, either by restricting the number of employees permitted to bid, or by restricting the posts and shifts covered under the process. In some systems, a limited number of the most senior employees participate in bidding, and posts are a limited set.

While each system and each institution must find the level of employee participation which is practical for that agency, even the most limited efforts should yield some beneficial results.

#### 6. Employee Relations Programs

Correctional institutions should develop procedures to encourage individual and collective employee comment and exchange upon institutional problems, procedures, and plans.

While unionization sometimes achieves this objective, other approaches are also feasible, including employee relations officers, employee advisory councils, "quality circles" such as exist in Japan and in certain American industries, and suggestion/grievance procedures. This survey found that unionized institutions typically average substantially lower attrition rates than non-union institutions. Unionization may not be a legal, feasible, or preferred option for many institutions, and therefore many prisons will attempt to reduce attrition by improving compensation and employee satisfaction in a non-union context. In such instances, alternative vehicles for employee comment and exchange should not be overlooked.

Some of the five participating states have union agreements. Michigan correctional employees are represented by several groups of unions, although some workers (such as clerical workers) are not represented. Missouri has a memorandum of understanding with AFSCME. According to that understanding, the union does not negotiate conditions of work and compensation, but it does serve as a conduit of information. Administrators sometimes review new procedures with the union for comment. However, most officials saw the major role of the union as an advocate for employees in general, and as a vehicle for employees to communicate complaints

to management. Studies of correctional work indicate that correctional officers as a whole are relatively isolated from management. Such isolation may be an important factor in attrition, and unionization -- if it serves as a vehicle for candid communication between workers and management -- may overcome this problem to some degree.

There are several approaches in use in the five states cooperating in this study which improve relations with employees.

In Tennessee, one manager stays late each pay period to distribute checks personally to third-shift workers. The goal is to maintain personal contact and communications with these workers, who are especially prone to isolation from day-shift management.

All five agencies reported that they encourage supervisors to obtain suggestions and comments from line employees about procedures and operations. Several suggested, however, that greater emphasis needed to be placed on relationships with line workers in training programs for supervisors.

Another vehicle for employee comment and exchange, the Japanese "quality circle" concept, has been successfully applied in several American businesses, and in some public sector agencies, notably the Norfolk Shipyard. The concept is relatively simple, involving three basic steps:

Employees volunteer to participate in teams, called quality circles, to assess and recommend improvements in specific procedures or areas of operation. Usually the team members actually work in the areas to be studied. The circle leader may be a supervisor for the work unit, or another employee selected by management or by the group. A trained facilitator provides guidance at difficult meetings, helps the group to define feasible solutions, guides the process of communication with management, and serves as a source of information and coordination with other groups.

Each team is taught two basic skills: productivity analysis and group communications. The productivity analysis training helps the employees to identify inefficient practices, and enables them to estimate the time and money saved by alternative procedures. The communication training helps the group to work together effectively and creatively.

The team meets regularly, perhaps for an hour each week. Some programs have routine and continuing meetings, while others conduct them for five to ten weeks per team. Suggestions are developed for improved operations, including more efficient procedures, and changes or additions to current procedures which make operations more effective. The ideas are presented to management for approval and implementation.



Most agencies have some formal or informal methods to obtain feedback from line employees about procedures and operations. Good supervisors constantly seek suggestions and comments from the people they supervise. There may be, however, several aspects to a QC program which are new and probably useful.

Line employees are directly consulted about the operations with which they are most familiar -- their own work.

The employees are organized to make constructive suggestions about a specific area of operation. Employee advisory boards, on the other hand, usually involve a limited number of employees commenting about a broad range of problems, leading to an often negative, diffuse, and confrontational response.

In several of the cooperating states, programs along the lines of the QC model are in various states of development:

South Carolina officials, both in the central offices and in several institutions, are planning an experimental project to explore the utility of the QC concept in corrections. As a pilot program, an Employee Relations Advisory Committee, representing various kinds of employees, has been set up to review and react to new policy proposals, and to suggest additional ones. The group is representative of the agency as a whole with respect to race, sex, and occupation, and is led by the Director of Personnel as a facilitator.

In Missouri, a "speak up" program is in effect, encouraging employees to suggest improvements in procedures and practices.

In Jackson, Michigan roll calls of all correctional officers have been replaced by several smaller roll calls of officers working in the same areas, such as housing units, or perimeter security. These smaller meetings serve as opportunities to discuss work problems.

In Arkansas at the Women's Unit, teams of employees conduct internal audits and make recommendations for improvement. Thus far, the program has operated without extra compensation to the employees, who appreciate the opportunity to try to solve problems.

The QC idea, and the elements already underway by several of the cooperating states, represents one of several approaches to the improvement of relations between management and the correctional workforce. A brief but useful publication on the concept is in the May 1981 issue of Performance, published by the Federal Office of Personnel Management.

#### 7. Job Content Improvement

Research and evaluation should be undertaken at the agency and

national level to identify specific job designs or tasks associated with attrition, and possible alternative work methods to reduce these effects. Some employees may find that certain aspects of correctional work are highly unpleasant. To the extent that many employees share these perceptions, such tasks may initiate unnecessary attrition. To the extent that the same task is viewed differently by employees in different institutions, the task designs which produce the most favorable perceptions can be used as models.

At each of the institutions observed, the correctional supervisors responsible for the assignment of officers to posts and shifts indicated that there were certain assignments which were not considered desirable by officers. The characteristics of these assignments varied greatly, and were not limited to specific shifts or types of posts. The following is a list of common problems with correctional work cited in the five states as reasons for attrition:

night shift work	involuntary overtime
insufficient pay for overtime	insufficient staff
assaults on officers	need for training
lack of officer authority	lack of feedback
driving distance to work	need for housing
inadequate promotion incentives	low salaries
building conditions	tower work conditions
need for supervisor training	

Each of these comments illustrates aspects of correctional work which can lead to attrition. There is, however, little or no systematic empirical information on the relative importance of these and other factors in employee decisions to leave the job.

#### 8. Incentive Pay Increments

Each agency should develop, within its overall employee compensation plan, a system of flexible incentive pay increments or bonuses to encourage work in positions, functions, and locations characterized by employee attrition. Such increments might be targeted at the following types of problems:

Employees working in locations where the statewide pay levels do not provide competitive compensation might receive bonuses to alleviate the problem.

Employees performing tasks which are not considered desirable by most employees might be rewarded, so as to encourage other employees to take on such duties, and to encourage current employees to continue.

Increments might be used to experiment with career ladder innovations or similar efforts, to determine effectiveness prior to the establishment of permanent rules and regulations establishing the program.

Increments might be used to encourage participation in other attrition reduction programs, such as a quality circle program.

Some officials have suggested that a program characterized by administrative discretion, where administrators may target positions, functions, or activities at will, would possibly create perceived inequity among employees not receiving the increments, possibly increasing attrition. Another criticism is that such increments, targeted at institutions with high attrition rates, would reward the attrition, and discourage administrative action in other areas to reduce the rates.

These problems must be acknowledged. However, they can be minimized by the approach taken in the administration of the program. The problems are offset by the potential cost economies enabled by targeting compensation increases directly at problem areas, without the requirement to expend funds on functions, areas, and activities not characterized by the attrition problem.

The following is a summary of incentive systems in place in the five states studied in depth:

State	Type of incentive
Arkansas	Housing near to institutions at low cost Escalation in leave days after 3 years Four-day work week at Cummins Unit
Michigan	Bonus after six years of employment Earlier retirement eligibility for employees working directly with prisoners Escalation of annual leave days earned Hazard pay for handling difficult inmates
Missouri	Set initial salary above initial grade Emergency squad bonus Bonus for lengthy transport details
Tennessee	Bonus system for low rates of sick leave
S. Carolina	Two grades higher pay in high security Two years added to seniority whenever an employee work rating is excellent Pay for volunteered overtime (pilot program) Compressed work week (one facility)

Officials supported this recommendation, but expressed reservations as to the funding by legislative bodies of additional incentive programs. Non-monetary incentives, or those which can pay for themselves seemed especially appropriate for the prevailing economic climate. The compressed work week has been implemented in many states in a variety of forms. It is popular in part because it often does not cost anything to implement, and in addition because it can be more

administratively convenient than the typical 5-day approach. In South Carolina, Kirkland Correctional Center employees work a 4/2 rather than a 5/2 week, working four days on and two days off. This system rotates weekend and holiday duty automatically. Slight differences in annual days worked each year between 4/2 and 5/2 employees are adjusted through changes in annual leave duration. In Arkansas, the Cummins Unit employs a 4/3 week, involving four 12-hour workdays followed by three days off. This reduces commuting costs for workers who live far from the prison, and simplifies roster management. Employees supported the program even though the institution has not, at the time of the visit, worked out a system to compensate employees for the extra eight hours worked each week (48 hours as opposed to 40 hours), but this could be handled through additional annual leave.

Given funding, officials suggested several priority areas for monetary incentives. An official in Arkansas identified a need for incentive bonuses for work on the night shift. In Michigan, an official suggested that some of the special benefits and privileges accorded to correctional officers be accorded to other types of employees who work in contact with prisoners. Another Michigan official suggested that a special incentive program along the lines of the Federal "Senior Executive Service" be instituted at the upper levels of prison management, so that excellence in management could be rewarded. Missouri is considering various types of incentives for work within a recently opened maximum security unit within the Missouri State Penitentiary.

#### 9. Career Ladder Development

Each agency should develop a structure of promotional incentives to encourage employees to remain with the agency as a career. Career ladder programs are the subject of a separate project initiated in tandem with this effort, and awarded to the the Criminal Justice Center of Sam Houston State University in Texas. The reader is encouraged to review that report.

While the other states indicated efforts in this area, Michigan's program was certainly the best. Michigan has developed a carefully designed program which not only rewards longevity, but also encourages officers to work within housing units, which has been a less popular assignment at some times in the past. Opportunities for housing unit officers include promotion to Assistant Unit Manager, Unit Manager, and on to higher management levels.

In other states, notably Missouri, the correctional officer series defines a traditional generalist advancement pattern. Line officers, under such a system, are each responsible for the broad range of functions usually assigned to officers, but the series does not provide for specialized job titles. Promotional positions generally entail supervision of line officers, but not specialized work. The major advantage of this system is the broad flexibility for the agency in the assignment of officers to work,

unconstrained by limitations of job titles and job descriptions. There are usually several disadvantages to such a system:

The career ladder is often unbalanced such that there is an inadequate number of promotional positions to respond in a timely manner to the number of officers ready (in terms of longevity and job performance) for promotion. Thus there is a theoretical career ladder, but not a practical one for most employees.

Because promotional positions are defined as supervisory positions, rather than as functionally specialized ones, only those officers fit for supervisory roles participate. In fact, (as was reported in South Carolina) sometimes officers not appropriate for or interested in supervisory roles nevertheless feel impelled to accept such promotions because this is the only type of promotion available. Functionally specialized promotional positions (such as Michigan's housing unit officers) provide a broader range of promotional opportunities more suitable for many officers.

There are several other critical career ladder deficiencies identified by one or more of the cooperating states:

Support and program staff often have very limited career opportunities within a correctional agency because their numbers are limited and their roles are highly specialized. For a teacher in Missouri, for example, only two levels are possible within the teacher series after entry, and one of the two is the Director of Education which can have only one incumbent and which has no subsequent promotional opportunity. To correct this problem, Missouri has developed the qualifications for a range of positions so as to recognize experience in alternate job series. This allows program and support employees, for example, to apply some of their work experience to qualify for promotional positions primarily associated with custody.

Female correctional officers encounter more limited promotional opportunities, especially in systems where they are assigned to work only in women's institutions, or to low hazard non-inmate-contact work, or to posts involving primarily typing, switchboard, or clerical work. When promotional opportunities are primarily as generalist correctional officer supervisors, then the limited experience reduces their qualifications for promotion. Many correctional agencies now allow and encourage women to work practically the full range of posts worked by male officers, while restructuring operational procedures to minimize privacy concerns on the part of officers and prisoners. In some cases, the trend towards the employment of women as correctional officers in institutions for male prisoners has opened up an important career opportunity for clerical workers, who find that they can greatly increase their income by becoming correctional officers.

Employees in work release centers manifest higher turnover rates than correctional employees in general. One explanation is that the centers are often small units offering limited promotional opportunities unless one is willing to move around the system a great deal.

Several agencies reported that recruitment and turnover problems were much greater during times when the general economy was doing well, and that recruitment and retention were more favorable when times were bad. This pattern suggests a critical role for career ladder systems. Correctional agencies may attract excellent employees during economic downturns, but the retention success will depend upon the ability of the system to retain people when the economy turns up. The key to such retention is the career ladder, and associated pay and benefits.

This problem is especially important when one considers some general demographic patterns for the nation during the next two decades. During the 1960's and 1970's, many correctional agencies relied on a "churning" approach to staffing -- many young people were hired, only to be retained for a few years, and to be replaced by some more young people. During these decades, the supply of young people was plentiful (adding to prisoner populations as well). During the next two decades, the absolute number of persons in their 20's will actually decline in many states. When correctional agencies lose workers after a few years of employment, there will be fewer workers available as replacements.

#### 10. Standard Administration of Work Hours and Wages

The use of, assignment to, and compensation for overtime work should be uniform, as embodied in a written policy statement, and it should be managed so that practice conforms to policy. One explanation for attrition expressed in several states was the requirement to work extra hours without compensation or compensatory time off. In Arkansas, Missouri, South Carolina and Tennessee, officials viewed this as the highest priority recommendation of this entire project. Arkansas was in the process of increasing the number of correctional officers in its workforce, with the goal of eliminating this problem. It remains, however, a problem in many states.

In some states no uniform policy exists. In others, the policy is not implemented. In Missouri, for instance, the written policy provides for compensation for overtime in the form of time-off at one and one-half times overtime hours worked. The scheduling of such leave is so difficult that in practice people only get the compensatory time when they resign or retire. One official described this as practically offering people a bonus to quit. In Tennessee compensatory time was viewed as a special problem at the Women's institution due to the smaller number of posts for women.

Officials in several states suggested that the compensatory time solution is impractical in corrections, because most overtime is due to chronic understaffing, not one-time imbalances in workloads. They argue that if they had enough employees to award compensatory time off for overtime, they would not need the overtime anyway. They suggest that overtime be paid for in dollars, and predict that this would lead to reduced use of overtime due to better planning of work and work schedules. An inadequate compensatory time procedure is no incentive for reduced overtime use because such procedures are usually not fully implemented anyway.

While compensatory time and overtime compensation programs can represent a partial solution to this problem, the most basic solution is to manage the creation of posts and positions, and the assignment of persons to them, so as to remove the need to use overtime except for extraordinary and emergency situations. One pattern which has been observed in high attrition states is to cope with the resulting low numbers of employees available by working them extra hours. While some employees appreciate the opportunity for extra income, the overall effect of such an approach is to set up the conditions for even greater levels of employee attrition, making the entire problem worse.

#### 11. Employee Training Programs

This project has not been able to demonstrate that greater levels of employee training would lead to lower attrition rates. There are two implications for training projects which arise from the study.

First, training programs are necessary elements of some of the preceding recommendations, especially with respect to the development and administration of career ladders.

Second, the method of administration of training programs may lead to higher or lower levels of employee attrition. As illustrated in the literature review chapter, realistic training programs can achieve lower subsequent attrition rates than ones which create unfulfilled expectations in trainees. In addition, training programs which may require employees to be separated from their families, and which may cause disruption in schedules for non-work activities such as education, could cause some workers to leave their positions.

Michigan, which has low attrition rates, provides the most "realistic" training of the states visited. Recruits receive two weeks of training in school, followed by two weeks on the job under close supervision, and then another two weeks of school to reexamine and learn from their practical experiences. Officials there consider the on-the-job aspect to be an important factor. South Carolina provides a week's orientation at a central academy followed by four weeks of training during the next six

months. Missouri provides training on-site, because it saves time and money and permits instruction to be tailored to the operations of the local institution.

In Missouri, officials observed that training of correctional supervisors should be a high priority. An investment in training the relatively small number of supervisors in interpersonal relations and in delegation of authority and responsibility might lead to a greater amount of improved performance and retention among line employees, than a comparable investment in line officer training. In Arkansas, an additional goal of supervisory training involves the assurance of continuing familiarity of supervisors with changing regulations.

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## National Survey of Correctional Institution Employee Attrition Rates

Funded by the National Institute of Corrections,  
U.S. Department of Justice

**T**HE purpose of this survey is to determine the extent of employee attrition in correctional institutions, and to identify potential causes and solutions to this problem. Employee attrition, sometimes referred to as "turnover," occurs when an employee resigns from a position or vacates it for some other reason, such as failure to fulfill probationary requirements, disciplinary action, retirement, or promotion.

The survey requests information about personnel transactions, such as hiring or terminating employees. It also asks for a broad range of other information in an effort to determine whether high or low rates are associated with institutional characteristics. These characteristics include operational procedures, working conditions, payrates, functional responsibilities, workforce characteristics, prisoner characteristics, and other factors.

This may be a difficult survey to complete, although it has been reviewed and refined by institutional personnel directors, survey specialists, and correctional managers. As you complete it, please keep in mind the following observations and suggestions:

1) We will see that your agency gets a copy of

the results, which will be published through the National Institute of Corrections.

2) If requested, each state prison system completing the surveys will receive a special analysis of the data, comparing that state's institutions to the national sample. This will be provided to the top administrator of the system to use for management purposes and to make available to each institution in your agency.

3) In completing the survey, you will probably encounter items that cannot be answered directly from your records or through observation. *In such instances, please estimate an answer to the best of your ability, and place an asterisk (\*) next to the item.* To the extent that such information is used in the final report, it will be qualified.

4) Please feel free to qualify your answers in the margins of the survey. We will evaluate your answers in light of such remarks, especially if the question does not apply very well to your institution.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Dr. F. Warren Benton  
Dr. Ellen Doree Rosen      *Co-Directors*  
Judy-Lynne Peters      *Research Associate*

Name of person completing the survey

Telephone number



# Institutional Characteristics

Unless otherwise indicated, please answer all questions with respect to 1979.

1) What was the proper capacity of this institution, in the opinion of the administration, based upon its 1979 staffing and configuration?  
\_\_\_\_\_

2) What was the average daily population of the institution?  
in 1978 \_\_\_\_\_ in 1979 \_\_\_\_\_

3) In a typical day, approximately how many prisoners in 1979 were:  
Black \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_  
Hispanic \_\_\_\_\_ Indian \_\_\_\_\_  
*(an individual may be counted twice)*

4) In a typical day, how many prisoners live behind each of the following types of security:  
behind walls \_\_\_\_\_  
behind a fence \_\_\_\_\_  
behind a double fence \_\_\_\_\_  
no physical perimeter \_\_\_\_\_  
other perimeter security \_\_\_\_\_  
*(please specify)* \_\_\_\_\_

5) How many prisoners live in the following types of housing units:  
open dorms  
100 prisoners or more in the dorm \_\_\_\_\_  
open dorms  
less than 100 but 50 or more in the dorm \_\_\_\_\_  
open dorms  
less than 50 but 10 or more in the dorm \_\_\_\_\_  
open dorms  
1-9 in the dorm \_\_\_\_\_  
open dorms  
2-4 in the dorm \_\_\_\_\_  
single rooms or cells \_\_\_\_\_

6) How many prisoners, if any, live in multi-tiered traditional cellhouses?  
\_\_\_\_\_

7) How many prisoners, if any, live in separated units of less than 150 prisoners, which have single occupancy cells or rooms?  
\_\_\_\_\_

8) How many prisoners spend more than ten hours per day confined to a cell or room?  
\_\_\_\_\_

9) What is the largest number of prisoners typically allowed together in a single unseparated space such as an auditorium, yard, or dining area?  
\_\_\_\_\_

10) On a typical weekday, how many prisoners are involved for more than four hours in the activities below *(try not to count any one prisoner more than once)*:  
Work release \_\_\_\_\_  
Prison industries \_\_\_\_\_  
Agriculture \_\_\_\_\_  
Educational programs \_\_\_\_\_  
Vocational programs \_\_\_\_\_  
Institutional support \_\_\_\_\_  
Confined to unit \_\_\_\_\_

11) Please indicate the numbers of total authorized positions for 1979, in the following general categories *(when necessary, estimate to the best of your ability)*:

Non-correctional officers

Warden, deputy and associate warden \_\_\_\_\_  
Business managers, accounts clerks \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretaries, typists \_\_\_\_\_  
Food service \_\_\_\_\_  
Vehicle maintenance \_\_\_\_\_  
Facility maintenance \_\_\_\_\_  
Commissary management \_\_\_\_\_  
Warehouse management \_\_\_\_\_  
Medical services \_\_\_\_\_  
Psychologists \_\_\_\_\_  
Case managers, social workers \_\_\_\_\_  
Teachers, vocational instructors \_\_\_\_\_  
Recreational staff \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Correctional officers (all shifts)

General supervisors \_\_\_\_\_  
Officers working towers and perimeter posts, and major entrances and exits \_\_\_\_\_  
Officers working in housing units \_\_\_\_\_  
Officers working in internal program and activity areas \_\_\_\_\_  
Officers working in non-unit and non-perimeter control centers \_\_\_\_\_  
Officers working in external transportation \_\_\_\_\_  
Other miscellaneous positions \_\_\_\_\_

12) Typically, how many correctional officers are on duty at the following times:  
weekday morning \_\_\_\_\_  
midnight \_\_\_\_\_

13) Typically, how many officers are on duty and in proximity to prisoners (within potential physical contact) at the following times:  
weekday morning \_\_\_\_\_  
midnight \_\_\_\_\_

14) How many of the following does this institution have? *(Hours are per day)*  
staffed 24-hour towers \_\_\_\_\_  
staffed 9-23 hour towers \_\_\_\_\_  
staffed less than 9-hour towers \_\_\_\_\_  
staffed 24-hour enclosed control centers \_\_\_\_\_  
staffed 9-23 hour enclosed control centers \_\_\_\_\_  
staffed less than 9-hour enclosed control centers \_\_\_\_\_

15) How many employees were assaulted seriously enough to require medical treatment other than a physical examination?  
during 1978 \_\_\_\_\_ during 1979 \_\_\_\_\_

16) How many prisoners were assaulted by other prisoners seriously enough to require medical treatment other than a physical examination?  
during 1978 \_\_\_\_\_ during 1979 \_\_\_\_\_

17) On a typical day, how many employees are absent from work, for reasons other than scheduled leave?  
correctional officers \_\_\_\_\_  
non-correctional officers \_\_\_\_\_

SECTION B

# Personnel Transactions

Please provide the following information directly from your records or on the basis of the best estimate of an employee familiar with personnel transactions. If your institution does not directly employ personnel (who, for instance, may be employees of

a parent agency), answer the questions on the basis of personnel assigned to work at your institution. Please place an asterisk (\*) next to any answer that is based on an estimate.

QUESTION	Administration		Support Operations		Line Correctional Officers		Supervisory Correctional Officers		Program and Activity		All other		TOTAL	
	1978	1979	1978	1979	1978	1979	1978	1979	1978	1979	1978	1979	1978	1979
1) Total authorized positions, full time equivalent														
2) Total persons hired for these positions														
3) Separations due to promotion within agency														
4) Separations due to nondisability retirement														
5) Separations due to disability retirement														
6) Separations due to disciplinary action														
7) Separations due to other involuntary action														
8) Separations due to voluntary resignation or abandonment of post														

National Survey of Correctional Institution Employee Attrition Rates

The following four questions are a breakdown of question 8. Note: "Employed" means continuous employment by this institution or another unit within the parent agency.

8a) Number employed six months or less																				
8b) Number employed more than six months but not more than two years																				
8c) Number employed more than two years but not more than five years																				
8d) Number employed more than five years																				

9) Employee separations for all reasons (total of questions 3-8, excluding 8a-8d)																				
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

For the year 1979      January   February   March   April   May   June   July   August   September   October   November   December

10) Number of separations due to voluntary resignations or abandonment of post by month.																				
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

11) How many hours would an average employee work during a typical week in 1979?

corrections officer \_\_\_\_\_

administrator \_\_\_\_\_

other \_\_\_\_\_

12) How is overtime compensated? (Please check one)

no compensation or compensatory time

compensation at current salary

compensation at approximately time and one-half

compensation at approximately double-time

compensatory time

other (please explain)

---

SECTION C

# Employee Characteristics

Unless otherwise indicated, please answer all questions with respect to the earliest day in 1979 for which the information is available.

1) How many employees are:

Black \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Hispanic \_\_\_\_\_ Indian \_\_\_\_\_

(an individual may be counted twice)

2) How many employees have worked for the following lengths of time at this institution?

less than six months \_\_\_\_\_

six months to two years \_\_\_\_\_

more than two years but not more than five years \_\_\_\_\_

more than five years \_\_\_\_\_

3) How many correctional officers hired in 1979 had to move to a new home to work for your institution?

\_\_\_\_\_

4) How many correctional officers live in the following types of housing?

institutional housing \_\_\_\_\_

rented private housing \_\_\_\_\_

own their own homes \_\_\_\_\_

5) How many employees live the following distances from work in minutes of travel time one way?

less than 30 minutes \_\_\_\_\_

30 to 60 minutes \_\_\_\_\_

over 60 minutes \_\_\_\_\_

6) How many correctional officers have the following levels of education?

less than high school \_\_\_\_\_

high school or equivalent \_\_\_\_\_

two years of college \_\_\_\_\_

four years of college \_\_\_\_\_

Master's degree \_\_\_\_\_

Doctorate \_\_\_\_\_

7) How many correctional officers attend school or work part-time in addition to employment at this institution?

attend school \_\_\_\_\_

second job \_\_\_\_\_

8) How many employees are represented by a union?

correctional officers \_\_\_\_\_

non-correctional officers \_\_\_\_\_

9) In your best estimate, how many employees during 1979 showed the following indications of stress?

divorce \_\_\_\_\_

alcoholism \_\_\_\_\_

drug addiction \_\_\_\_\_

mental health problems \_\_\_\_\_

chronic absenteeism \_\_\_\_\_

SECTION D

# Management Practices

Unless otherwise indicated, please answer all questions with respect to 1979.

1) How are job openings generally announced?

	Yes	No
by word of mouth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
by civil service notices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
by advertisement in the news media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
through schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
other (please specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2) What was the annual starting salary of each of the following positions for 1978 and 1979?

	1978	1979
Entry level correctional officer	_____	_____
Supervisory correctional officer	_____	_____
Counselor/case manager	_____	_____
Secretary	_____	_____
Deputy Warden	_____	_____
Carpenter	_____	_____
Account clerk, entry level	_____	_____

3) What was the 1979 starting annual salary for the following:

Entry level police officer in largest agency within 35 miles \_\_\_\_\_

Entry level social worker in largest agency within 35 miles \_\_\_\_\_

A union carpenter \_\_\_\_\_

A supervisory police officer in largest agency within 35 miles \_\_\_\_\_

4) Please check the appropriate column if the following fringe benefits are available to a correctional officer having worked for one year:

	limited less than 50% of cost	substantial 50%-90% of cost	complete over 90% of cost
hospitalization coverage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
dental care coverage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
physician office visits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
alcoholism treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
personal tuition subsidy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
family tuition subsidy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5) Does your institution provide meals for employees while on duty?

	Yes	No
at no charge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
partially subsidized	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
at a price roughly equal to local restaurant prices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6) What types of orientation procedures are used for new correctional officers?

	Yes	No
a formal lecture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a film	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a tour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a three-day or less training session	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a three-day to two-week training session	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
greater than a two-week training session	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
an informal briefing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7) How many hours of training are required for an entry level officer before he or she assumes a post?

\_\_\_\_\_

8) How many hours of inservice training would a typical officer receive in his or her second year of service?

\_\_\_\_\_

9) How long a probationary period of employment is operational for new entry level correctional officers?

none	<input type="checkbox"/>
less than three months	<input type="checkbox"/>
three to six months	<input type="checkbox"/>
over six months	<input type="checkbox"/>

10) What percentage of administrative or supervisory positions are filled:

from within (%) \_\_\_\_\_ from without (%) \_\_\_\_\_

11) Number of employees given discretionary raises, during 1979, over the standard raise provided for most employees.

\_\_\_\_\_

14) Does the institution have a formal employee suggestion system?

Yes      No

with rewards       

with commendation    

12) What criteria must a correctional officer meet before he or she may be eligible to retire?

	Years of Service	Minimum Age
At least 50 percent of last salary	_____	_____
At 75 percent of last salary	_____	_____
At 100 percent of last salary	_____	_____

15) Which of the following are subject to provisions of a contract negotiated through collective bargaining, for correctional officers:

	Yes	No
wages and benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
hours of work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
supervisory procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
institutional operating procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

\_\_\_\_\_

13) What procedure is generally used in determining the assignment of individual correctional officers to the following. (Please rank these from 1 for the most applicable to 4 for the least applicable).

	Posts	Overtime	Vacation
Seniority bidding	_____	_____	_____
Officer bidding process	_____	_____	_____
Periodic assignment by supervisory staff	_____	_____	_____
By supervisory staff on a day-to-day basis	_____	_____	_____

16) What was the number of employee grievances filed during 1979, if such a system exists. If no system exists, answer "X."

\_\_\_\_\_

17) By marking an "X" on the scale below, please indicate your general impression of the prevalent public attitude toward the job of corrections officer.

Respected as valued professional	No Opinion	Public mistrust
-------------------------------------	------------	--------------------

Our final report will also review any promising approaches to reducing turnover, either which are planned for or in operation. Please provide us with information about any such programs at your institution by enclosing some descriptive information and/or giving us the name and telephone number of someone we might contact.



**END**