

Keeping Score: Florida Department of Corrections' Performance Measures

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Abstract

This research paper focuses on the Florida Department of Corrections Performance-Based Assessments performance initiative specific to the Office of Institutions. The Office of Institutions areas of responsibility include Institutions, Security Operations, Support Services, Facilities Services, Classification and Central Records and the Admission & Release Sections. The objective of this research paper is to review and evaluate the reported performance areas of measurement and data to (1) determine the level of importance to the Florida Department of Corrections' stakeholders; (2) highlight what the stakeholders considered a performance issue; and (3) determine if the Florida Department is meeting its intended goals for the initiative. 239 people were surveyed to include, Inmate visiting families, law enforcement and corrections members, Department of Corrections Volunteers and Department of Corrections employees.

Introduction

It's no secret the Florida Department of Corrections like other correctional agencies nationwide are under the watchful eye of legislators, the media, the general public, the employees as well as the inmate population. The enormous challenges faced as an agency are not that different than those of any other correctional or governmental agency or that of a private business. The Leadership Teams expend enormous amounts of time and energy dealing with external pressures on the agency to include but not limited to budget restraints and reductions, political uncertainty, and public perception of the organization. The Florida Department of Corrections like many other correctional agencies has introduced Performance-Based Assessments to all areas of operations. The Department of Corrections' goals are to enhance their organizational performance, ensure accountability, highlight success, and facilitate change when and where it is needed. The purpose of this paper is to review and evaluate the performance data reported for the Office of Institutions to determine whether the intended results are being achieved. The Office of Institutions areas of responsibility include Institutions, Security Operations, Support Services, Facilities Services, Classification and Central Records and the Admission & Release Sections.

Literature Review

The Stop Turning Out Prisoners (STOP) Act of 1995 requires Florida inmates to serve at least eight-five (85) percent of their sentences. This act replaced the Safe Streets Initiative of 1994 which resulted in inmates serving a minimum of fifty-five (55) percent of their sentences. The State of Florida has and continues to be steadfast in its commitment to ensure inmates serve eight-five (85) percent of their sentences, and that offenders on community supervision are comprehensively supervised. However, eighty-seven percent of all inmates incarcerated in Florida will eventually be released back into the community and approximately thirty-three (33) percent are projected to return to prison within three years. (Tucker, 2012) A 1995 report from the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPGA) noted that most of the growth in Florida's prison population since 1985 was due to re-incarceration rather than offenders entering prison for the first time. (Alvarez, 1995)

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) report *Prisoners in 2011*, the State of Florida continues to have the third highest prison incarceration rate in the United States. (Carson & Sabol, 2012) The Florida Department of Corrections employs more than 25,000 either certified correctional officers or probation officers in their prison facilities and in community corrections statewide. The Department has 143 facilities statewide which includes forty-eight (48) major institutions, fifteen (15) annexes, seven (7) private facilities, thirty-three (33) work camps, six (6) road prisons, twenty (20) DOC operated work release centers and thirteen (13) private work release centers. They are responsible for the care, custody and treatment of almost 100,000 inmates in state prisons and almost 115,000 offenders on community supervision. On April 4, 2013 the inmate population was 100,432. (Bureau of Classification, 2013) Their total budget for the 2012-13 fiscal year is \$2.1 billion. This is a decrease of \$117.7 million from the 2011-12 fiscal year appropriation (5.4 percent decrease). (Office of Legislative Affairs, 2013)

Secretary Michael D. Crews describes today as challenging times for the Florida Department of Corrections. As correctional resources and finances become more limited, increased threats of privatization gets louder, and the continued pressure to reduce the taxpayers' bill, planning becomes more critical to target those limited resources toward the best strategies for achieving the most important results. The Florida Department of Corrections must improve their focus to demonstrate their efforts that produce results that enhance organizational performance, accountability, and overall public safety. (Crews, 2012)

According to the Florida Department of Corrections Performance Measures information site, Performance-Based Assessments performance data is reported for all program areas on a quarterly basis. For those areas with multiple offices, facilities, and branches located throughout the state, an evaluation and scoring system is used to track improvement and/or change on multiple performance indicators across two periods of assessment. Each program area has a performance dashboard which includes their Quarterly Performance Scorecard. The Office of Institutions performance dashboard contains performance data in the following areas: Public Safety, Institutional Safety, Inmate Justice, Inmate Idleness & Achievement, Facility Management, and

Community Impact. A reference guide is provided to give a summary description of the measures, the reporting frequency, the goal for each measure, and the type of ranking system used to evaluate measures if applicable. (Performance Measures, 2013)

In reviewing the performance dashboard it was determined that the Public Safety performance data measures the number of escapes from a secure perimeter. The Institutional Safety performance data measures the number of inmate-on-inmate homicides and percentage of non-compliance on unannounced security audits. The Inmate Justice performance data measures the rate of inmate appeals classified as healthcare complaints (per 100 inmates). The Inmate Idleness & Achievement performance data measures the rate of inmate idleness (inmates per job assignment) on the last day of the quarter, the rate of General Equivalency Diplomas (GEDs) awarded (per 100 inmates) and the rate of vocational certificates awarded (per 100 inmates). The Facility Management performance data measures the electrical usage (kilowatt consumption) and the value of farming production. The Community Impact performance data measures the number of inmates per volunteer and the number of volunteer hours. (Performance Measures, 2013)

In reviewing literature from a variety of different sources, performance measurement and performance management were terms used interchangeably but they can be very different. Performance measurement helps an organization monitor performance while performance management is multitude of different practices designed to improve performance. "Performance management in the public sector is an ongoing, systematic approach to improving results through evidence-based decision making, continuous organizational learning, and a focus on accountability for performance. Performance management is integrated into all aspects of an organization's management and policy-making processes, transforming an organization's practices so it is focused on achieving improved results for the public." (The National Performance Management Advisory Commission, 2010)

According to the "Correctional Leadership Competencies for the 21st Century Managers and Supervisor," information or data is what managers and supervisors need to evaluate and make decisions about the programs and areas they are responsible for. The information determines whether or not the intended results are being achieved. Performance measurement is a method that can be used to measure the success of a program or area. Performance measurement examines the tangible results and accomplishments of an activity or program according to a specific set of criteria or specific numerical or otherwise definable goals. However, in many cases, a program's results may not be easily defined or measured in terms of a numerical goal. In those cases, or when a correctional agency/organization wants to look at a program from a broader perspective, a performance evaluation or performance audit may be appropriate. (Campbell, 2006)

Methods

The purpose of this research is to determine whether the performance data reported for the Office of Institutions is meeting the goals of the Florida Department of Corrections to enhance their organizational performance, ensure accountability, highlight success, and facilitate change when and where it is needed. The Office of Institutions areas of responsibility include Institutions, Security Operations, Support Services, Facilities Services, Classification and Central Records and the Admission & Release Sections. Therefore data was collected from a total of 239 surveys. The method of distribution for the surveys was via online surveys utilizing Survey Monkey and printed surveys. Additional survey follow up was done in two week intervals via email and telephone calls to those that had not responded. The Department has numerous stakeholders to include but not limited to legislators, local law enforcement, the general public, its employees as well as the inmate population and their families. Data was collected from the following groups:

- 80 convenient anonymous printed samples surveys were provided to inmate families visiting at Central Florida Reception Center.
- 34 surveys were emailed to the Florida Criminal Justice Executive Institute Senior Leadership Class #16.
- 45 Department of Corrections' regular Chaplaincy Volunteers and
- 80 Florida Department of Corrections employees were randomly selected and emailed to be surveyed.

The survey consisted of ten questions. See Appendix for a copy of the survey.

Results

239 surveys were distributed via online and printed and 204 were returned generating an 85% return rate. The rate of return breakdown of those participating was as follows:

Participating Group	Surveys Sent	Surveys Returned	Rate of Return
Inmate Visiting Families	80	77	96%
Senior Leadership Class #16	34	27	79%
DC Chaplaincy Volunteers	45	30	67%
DC Employees	80	70	88%
Totals	239	204	85%

An analysis of the returned surveys revealed that 100% of all ten questions were responded to. A complete analysis revealed that a total of 48% of those participating in the survey are aware of the Florida Department of Corrections Performance Measures initiative. The rate of awareness breakdown for those participating was as follows:

Knowledge of DC Performance Measures	Inmate Families	SLP Class#16	Chaplaincy Volunteers	Employees	Percentage
Yes	26	6	15	50	48%
No	51	21	15	20	52%
Surveys Returned	77	27	30	70	204

A total of 78% of those participating rated the importance of the overall performance of the Florida Department of Corrections as very important, 10% somewhat important, 12% important, 0% not important, 0% No opinion. The rate of importance of performance measures breakdown of those participating was as follows:

Rate of Importance	Inmate Families	SLP Class#16	Chaplaincy Volunteers	Employees	Percentage
Very Important	57	13	30	58	78%
Somewhat Important	8	8	0	5	10%
Important	12	5	0	7	12%
Not Important	0	0	0	0	0%
No Opinion	0	0	0	0	0%
Surveys Returned	77	27	30	70	204

A total of 46% of those participating in the survey responded that the program area of Public Safety was ranked as the order of most importance, 16% ranked Institutional Safety as the order of most importance, 25% ranked Inmate Justice as the order of most importance, 4% ranked Inmate Idleness & Achievement as the order of most importance, 1% ranked Facility Management as the order of most importance, 8% ranked Community Impact as the order of most importance. The rate of importance order breakdown of those participating was as follows:

Order of Importance	Inmate Families	SLP Class#16	Chaplaincy Volunteers	Employees	Percentage
Public Safety	17	13	11	52	46%
Institutional Safety	12	0	5	15	16%
Inmate Justice	44	6	2	0	25%
Inmate Idleness & Achievement	1	3	5	0	4%
Facility Management	0	2	0	0	1%
Community Impact	3	3	7	3	8%
Surveys Returned	77	27	30	70	204

A total of 89% of those participating responded 0-5 escapes from an institution quarterly would be considered a public safety performance issue, 11% responded 6-10 escapes, 0% responded 11-15, 0% responded 16-20 and 0% responded 21 or more. The number of institutional escapes breakdown of those participating was as follows:

Institutional Escapes	Inmate Families	SLP Class#16	Chaplaincy Volunteers	Employees	Percentage
0-5	65	25	22	70	89%
6-10	12	2	8	0	11%
11-15	0	0	0	0	0%
16-20	0	0	0	0	0%
21 or more	0	0	0	0	0%
Surveys Returned	77	27	30	70	204

A total of 91% of those participating responded 0-5 inmate-on-inmate homicides in an institution quarterly would be considered an institutional safety performance issue, 5% responded 6-10 inmate-on-inmate homicides, 3.5% responded 11-15 inmate-on-inmate homicides, less than 1% responded 16-20 inmate-on-inmate homicides and 0% responded 21 or more. The inmate on inmate homicide breakdown of those participating was as follows:

Inmate on Inmate Homicides	Inmate Families	SLP Class#16	Chaplaincy Volunteers	Employees	Percentage
0-5	63	23	30	70	91%
6-10	7	3	0	0	5%
11-15	7	0	0	0	3.5%
16-20	0	1	0	0	.5%
21 or more	0	0	0	0	0%
Surveys Returned	77	27	30	70	204

A total of 10% of those participating responded 0-5 non-compliance findings on an unannounced security audit at an institution quarterly would be considered an institutional safety performance issue, 15% responded 6-10 non-compliance findings, 20% responded 11-15 non-compliance findings, 22% responded 16-20 non-compliance findings and 33% responded 21 or more non-compliance findings. The non-compliance findings breakdown of those participating was as follows:

Non-compliance Unannounced Audit	Inmate Families	SLP Class#16	Chaplaincy Volunteers	Employees	Percentage
0-5	9	10	2	0	10%
6-10	7	9	6	8	15%
11-15	11	3	15	12	20%
16-20	17	3	3	21	22%
21 or more	33	2	4	29	33%
Surveys Returned	77	27	30	70	204

A total of 6% of those participating responded 0-10 inmate healthcare compliant appeals at an institution quarterly would be considered an inmate justice performance issue, 16% responded 11-20 inmate healthcare compliant appeals, 16% responded 21-30 inmate healthcare compliant appeals, 12% responded 31-40 inmate healthcare compliant appeals, 14% responded 41-50 inmate healthcare compliant appeals and 36% responded 51 or more inmate healthcare compliant appeals. The healthcare complaints breakdown of those participating was as follows:

Healthcare Complaints	Inmate Families	SLP Class#16	Chaplaincy Volunteers	Employees	Percentage
0-10	5	6	3	0	6%
11-20	12	10	5	6	16%
21-30	13	4	4	11	16%
31-40	3	2	2	17	12%
41-50	17	1	2	8	14%
51 or more	27	4	14	28	36%
Surveys Returned	77	27	30	70	204

A total of 9% of those participating responded 0-20 inmates not assigned to a work program to include education, substance abuse or vocational at an institution quarterly would be considered an Inmate Idleness and Achievement performance issue, 16% responded 21-40 inmates not assigned to a work program, 24% responded 41-60 inmates not assigned to a work program, 21% responded 61-80 inmates not assigned to a work program, 26% responded 81-100 inmates not assigned to a work program

and 4% responded 101 or more inmates not assigned to a work program. The inmate unassigned breakdown of those participating was as follows:

Inmates Unassigned	Inmate Families	SLP Class#16	Chaplaincy Volunteers	Employees	Percentage
0-20	3	8	7	0	9%
21-40	12	2	8	10	16%
41-60	19	7	6	17	24%
61-80	14	4	5	19	21%
81-100	22	4	4	24	26%
101 or more	7	2	0	0	4%
Surveys Returned	77	27	30	70	204

A total of 78% of those participating responded yes they would consider the amount of electrical usage (kilowatt consumption) and the value of farming production at an institution a facility management performance issue and 22% responded no they would not. The electrical and farming breakdown of those participating was as follows:

Electrical Usage Farming Production	Inmate Families	SLP Class#16	Chaplaincy Volunteers	Employees	Percentage
Yes	53	22	21	63	78%
No	24	5	9	7	22%
Surveys Returned	77	27	30	70	204

A total of 92% of those participating responded yes they would consider the number of inmates per volunteer and the number of volunteer hours at an institution a facility a community impact issue and 8% responded no they would not. The volunteer breakdown of those participating was as follows:

Chaplaincy Volunteers	Inmate Families	SLP Class#16	Chaplaincy Volunteers	Employees	Percentage
Yes	67	23	30	68	92%
No	10	4	0	2	8%
Surveys Returned	77	27	30	70	204

Discussion

The overall rate of return of the survey was 85% with the inmate visiting families with the highest rate of return with the Department of Corrections employees following closely behind and the Chaplaincy Volunteers being the lowest. This high rate of return may be indicative that the Department of Corrections' stakeholders are very concerned about the overall performance of the agency and willingness to provide feedback to enhance the Department's effort.

The overall purpose of the survey was to determine if the performance data reported for the Office of Institutions is the meeting the goals of the Florida Department of Corrections to enhance their organizational performance, ensure accountability, highlight success, and facilitate change when and where it is needed. The first three questions of the survey were designed to identify awareness and importance of the Performance Measures Initiative. The remaining seven questions were designed to target specific areas to obtain the overall perception level of performance expectation for the reporting program areas of the Office of Institution.

Analyzing the data from the first three questions, 52% of the stakeholders are not aware of the Department of Corrections Performance Measures Initiative. However, 78% of the stakeholder rated the performance of the agency as very important specifically in the areas of Public Safety followed by Inmate Justice and Institutional Safety trailing. The remaining data highlighted the specific level of expectations to determine what would be considered Public Safety, Institutional Safety, Inmate Justice, Inmate Idleness and Achievement, Facility Management, and Community Impact issues.

From my personal professional Correctional experience, I agree with the data analysis and level of expectations that supports the concern for Public Safety which 89% of the participants identified the number of escapes quarterly as 0-5 escapes from an institution as an issue or concern. I further agree with the data analysis and level of expectations in the area of Institutional Safety which 91% of the participants considered 0-5 inmate-on-inmate homicides in an institution quarterly as an issue combined with the 33% of the participants who considered 21 or more non-compliance findings on an unannounced security audit at an institution quarterly as an issue or concern. The mission of the Florida Department of Corrections is "To protect public safety, to ensure the safety of Department personnel, and to provide proper care and supervision of all offenders under our jurisdiction while assisting their re-entry into society." (Crews, 2012) Therefore it is the Department's duty to ensure Institutional safety in its institutions.

The data analysis also supports the stakeholders concern for Inmate Justice revealed 36% participating considered 51 or more the number of inmate healthcare compliant appeals at an institution quarterly that would be considered an inmate justice performance issue. The Florida Department of Corrections makes accessible comprehensive medical, dental, and mental health treatment for both male and female inmates statewide. This includes health education, preventive care, and chronic illness clinics at the community standard level of care mandated by the Federal government.

The Department of Corrections recently implemented a statewide health care privatization initiative that allows DOC to provide care more efficiently. (Crews, 2012)

The data analysis revealed that 4% of those participating responded that 101 or more inmates not assigned to a work program to include education, substance abuse or vocational at an institution quarterly would be considered an Inmate Idleness and Achievement performance issue. The Florida Department of Corrections has developed Correctional Substance Abuse, Educational and Vocational Programs at Institutional and Community-Based sites throughout the state. All inmates are screened at reception, and those inmates identified as being in need of services are either referred to a substance abuse, educational or vocational program, or placed on a waiting list pending availability of such programming. Many of the myths of the Florida Department of Corrections is that inmates do nothing while in prisons. However, on May 8, 2012 there were 100,591 inmates in the Florida prison system. About 80% of them are assigned to work, assigned to participate in a Substance Abuse Program, or Vocational Education or Adult Education, or are assigned to some other program activity. The remaining 20% are medically unable to work, or are participating in the reception and orientation process, assigned to a disciplinary work squad as a result of rule infractions, assigned to a restricted labor squad or are in some type of confinement for management purposes, including death row. (Crews, 2012)

The data analysis surprisingly revealed that 78% of those participating responded yes, they would consider the amount of electrical usage (kilowatt consumption) and the value of farming production at an institution a facility management performance issue contrary to the 1% ranked Facility Management as the order of most importance. However, considering the state of the economy the Department of Corrections has been proactive in reducing food cost utilizing the farming projects throughout the state. Inmates are cultivating approximately 887 acres at over 48 different farms and gardens and five University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) facilities. These programs save taxpayers money and teach the inmates a viable skill and reduce inmate idleness. (Crews, 2012)

The data analysis revealed that 92% of those participating responded yes they would consider the number of inmates per volunteer and the number of volunteer hours at an institution a facility a community impact issue. The Florida Department of Corrections reports that more than 16,000 Florida citizens contribute thousands of hours of valuable service in Florida prisons. Each volunteer has a job description that defines the type of service that volunteer is able to offer. Volunteers in Chaplaincy Services provide weekly worship services, teach religious education classes, keep the chapel open in the chaplain's absence, and visit inmates who may not be able to visit the chapel, hold seminars and participate in a wide variety of special events. Some volunteers volunteer for a couple of hours each month, and some give numerous hours each week. The level of involvement is based on the institutional need and volunteer availability. (Crews, 2012) My personal professional Correctional experience revealed that volunteers are one of the Department of Corrections' valuable assets and their public service is to be honored and is very important to the success of an institution's Re-Entry initiatives.

Recommendations

Based on the survey results and the several different pieces of literature that was reviewed, the Florida Department of Corrections introduction of Performance-Based Assessments to all areas of operations is very important to its stakeholders. However, the purpose of Performance management is to provide results to be reviewed. This survey revealed more than half, 52% of the stakeholders had no knowledge of the initiative. Access to and/or information in reference to the agency's initiative is only available via the Department of Corrections website. I recommend a more aggressive approach or campaign to ensure the watchful eyes of legislators, the media, the general public, the employees as well as the inmate population have access to this information. That approach would include social media, representation at law enforcement conventions and seminars, frequent regular town hall meetings in the communities and Departmental workshops and/or meetings. For the inmate population, inmate families and Volunteers, I recommend informative posters and/or flyers in all areas accessible for them to view.

Based on my research, it is apparent the Florida Department of Corrections introduction of Performance-Based Assessments initiative will assist the Department of Corrections to meet their goals to enhance their organizational performance, ensure accountability, highlight success, and facilitate change when and where it is needed specifically in the area reviewed which was the performance data reported for the Office of Institutions. The initiative is an ongoing, systematic approach to improving results through evidence-based decision making, continuous organizational learning, and a focus on accountability for performance.

Assistant Warden Paulette Julien has work for the Florida Department of Corrections for 23 years. She began her career in Corrections in 1990 as a Correctional Officer Trainee advancing to the rank of a Correctional Officer Captain. In 2006 she transitioned to a Classification Officer advancing to a Classification Supervisor. In 2010 she was promoted to Assistant Warden for Programs. She is currently assigned as Assistant Warden for Operations at Central Florida Reception Center in Orlando, Florida. Paulette has an Associate of Arts degree from Lake City Community College, a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from the University of Central Florida and a Master of Public Administration from Troy University.

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Appendix A

Survey Questions

1. Are you aware of the Florida Department of Corrections Performance Measures initiative?
2. How important is the overall performance of the Florida Department of Corrections to you?
3. Rank the program area in order of importance (1-6, 6 being most important)
Public Safety
Institutional Safety
Inmate Justice
Inmate Idleness & Achievement
Facility Management
Community Impact
4. How many escapes from an institution quarterly would you consider a public safety performance issue?
5. How many inmate-on-inmate homicides at an institution quarterly would you consider an institutional safety performance issue?
6. How many non-compliance findings on an unannounced security audit at an institution quarterly would you consider an institutional safety performance issue?
7. How many inmate healthcare compliant appeals at an institution quarterly would you consider an inmate justice performance issue?

8. How many inmates not assigned to a work program to include education, substance abuse or vocational would you consider at an institution quarterly would you consider an Inmate Idleness & Achievement performance issue?
9. Do you consider the amount of electrical usage (kilowatt consumption) and the value of farming production at an institution a facility management performance issue? Yes or No
10. Do you consider the number of inmates per volunteer and the number of volunteer hours at an institution a facility a community impact issue? Yes or No