

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland at College Park

Drug Arrests Seen By Most Jail Administrators as a Contributor to Crowding

Recently released data from the 1994 National Assessment Program show that arrests for drug possession and sales are the most frequently reported contributing factors to crowded jail conditions nationwide. Of the 103 crowded prison facilities surveyed by mail, 94% reported that drug arrests are a major or moderate contributing factor to their crowded conditions. Similar results were found among administrators of crowded state prisons--88% reported drug arrests as a contributing factor to crowded conditions.

Jail Administrators' Views on Factors That Contribute to Overcrowding* (N = 103 Administrators of Crowded Jails)

<u>Contributing Factors to Jail Crowding</u>	<u>Percent Reporting Factor as Major or Moderate Contributor</u>
Arrests for Drug Possession	94.0%
Arrests for Drug Sales	94.0
Arrests for Violent Crimes	90.0
Probation Violations	84.0
Jail Incarceration for Persons Convicted of Felonies	72.7
Parole Violations	72.0
Domestic Violence	68.7
Length of Sentences to Jail	68.7
Mandatory Jail Sentences for Driving While Intoxicated	64.6
Lack of Community Alternatives for Mentally Ill	58.6
Insufficient Pretrial Release Options	55.5
Prison System Delay in Accepting Convicted Felons	54.5
Insufficient Alternative Sentence Programs	52.5

*Surveys were mailed to the criminal justice agencies in a selected sample of 411 counties nationwide. All 211 counties having populations greater than 250,000 residents were selected, along with a random sample of 200 counties having populations between 50,000 and 250,000 residents. A total of 409 jail administrators were mailed surveys, 315 (77%) responded, and 103 (35%) were categorized as crowded (operating at more than 110% of their rated inmate capacity).

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from data from *National Assessment Program: 1994 Survey Results*. National Institute of Justice Research Report. For information on ordering a copy of this report, contact the National Criminal Justice Reference Service at 800-851-3420 or 301-251-5500.

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