

Oklahoma Department of Corrections

Female Offender Incarceration Briefing Paper - December 2009

Our mission is to, "Reduce Oklahoma's female incarceration rate to at, or below, the national average while protecting the public, the employees, and the offenders."

Reentry Needs:

Safe and Affordable Housing;
Transitional Income;
Employment;
Transportation;
Child Care;
Medical Care;
Mental Health Care;
Substance Abuse Treatment;
Community Support; and
Positive Role Models.

Female Incarceration

Oklahoma is first in the nation in female incarceration, incarcerating 134 women per 100,000 population compared to the national average of 69.

Female Offender Population

During Fiscal Year 2009, there were 1,284 female offenders received into the Oklahoma Department of Corrections.

The top five controlling offense categories for Fiscal Year 2009 receptions were:

Possession, Obtaining Controlled Dangerous Substance 21.4% (N=567);
Distributing Controlled Dangerous Substance 19.2% (N=510);
Forgery 7.7% (N=205);
Assault 6.4% (N=169); and
Larceny 6.3% (N=166).

Of the 1,284 Fiscal Year 2009 receptions:

- 1,068 were new court admissions (not on probation or parole);
- 184 were probation violators; and
- 22 were parole violators.

Probation and parole violators include offenders with new cases and those receiving technical violations.

During Fiscal Year 2009, 1,316 female offenders were released.

At the end of Fiscal Year 2009, 2,651 female offenders were incarcerated.

Of the 2,651 incarcerated offenders:

- 67.7 percent were incarcerated for nonviolent offenses;
- 51.6 percent were incarcerated for drug offenses; and
- 15.8 percent were incarcerated for 85 percent offenses.

Common Characteristics of Female Offenders

Trauma and Violence in Childhood:

Child Physical and/or Sexual Abuse 66.4% (N=200);

Father Violent in Home 42.9% (N=129);

Mother Violent in Home 28.6% (N=86).

Trauma and Violence in Adulthood:

Domestic Violence 71.1% (N=214);

Rape Past the Age of 18 36.2% (N=109);

Received Abuse Counseling 39.5% (N=79).

Source: Oklahoma Study of Incarcerated Mothers and Their Children 2009; Susan F. Sharp, Ph.D., Emily Pain, and the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth. Sample size was 301 incarcerated female offenders.

Substance Abuse

63 percent (N=807) of Fiscal Year 2009 receptions (N=1,284) were assessed with a moderate to high need for substance abuse treatment.

Economic Marginalization and Poverty

Of the Fiscal Year 2009 receptions (N=1,284), 1,260 were administered a Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R) at the time of reception. The LSI-R helps identify offender needs that, if not met, may lead to repeat involvement in the criminal justice system. LSI-R results relevant to employment and poverty include:

- 85.7 percent (N=1,080) reported being unemployed at the time of arrest;
- 65 percent (819) reported being frequently unemployed when in the labor market; 11.4 percent (N=144) reported severe difficulty and not managing their financial situation at the time of arrest;
- 62.7 percent (N=790) reported some difficulty in managing financial resources at the time of arrest; and
- 45.7 percent (N=576) reported a reliance on social assistance at the time of arrest.

Of the 1,284 female offenders received in Fiscal Year 2009, 72 percent (N=919) had a need for education (e.g., Literacy, Adult Basic Education, General Equivalency Diploma).

Race and Ethnicity

July 2008 Oklahoma Census Estimate Females:

White 71.90%;
Black 7.70%;
Native American 7.70%;
Hispanic 7.00%;
Asian 1.70%;
Other 4.00%.

End of Fiscal Year 2009 Female Offender Population:

White 57.60%;
Black 25.50%;
Native American 12.60%;
Hispanic 4.00%;
Asian 0.30%;
Other 0.10%.

Medical and Mental Health Issues

Female offenders are treated for a variety of medical and mental health issues. Of the 2,651 incarcerated at the end of Fiscal Year 2009, 69 percent (N=1,828) had a history of or were currently being treated for a mental disorder such as psychotic disorders, major mood disorders (i.e., depression, bipolar disorder), or post-traumatic stress disorder.

Female Offenders as Mothers

Children of Incarcerated Mothers

Of the 301 Female Offenders Surveyed:

257 Had At Least One Child;
257 Offenders Had 760 Children (3 Children Per Offender);
65.39 Percent of the 760 Children Were Under the Age of 18.

Extrapolated for Entire Population of 2,651 Female Offenders:

2,264 With Children;
6,792 Children Total;
4,441 Children Under Age of 18 .

45.5 Percent (N=137) of Female Offenders Lived With Minor Child Prior to Incarceration (265 Children).

Source: Oklahoma Study of Incarcerated Mothers and Their Children 2009; Susan F. Sharp, Ph.D., Emily Pain, and the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth.

Reentry Needs

Reentry needs include:

- Safe and affordable housing;
- Transitional income;
- Employment (living expenses, court costs, fines, restitution, child support);
- Transportation;
- Childcare;
- Medical care;
- Mental health care;
- Substance abuse treatment;
- Community support (family, friends, spiritual); and
- Positive relationships/role models.

Need Further Information?

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