



U.S. Department of Justice  
National Institute of Corrections

# NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CORRECTIONS

## A Resource for Federal, State, Local, and Tribal Corrections



- TRAINING
- TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
- INFORMATION
- POLICY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT
- COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS



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### MISSION STATEMENT

The National Institute of Corrections is a center of learning, innovation, and leadership that shapes and advances effective correctional practice and public policy.

### STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

NIC's activities contribute significantly to the achievement of federal, state, and local correctional goals and priorities.

Goals and Priorities	NIC provides...
Effectively managed prisons, jails, and community corrections programs and facilities.	...planning, management, and operations strategies that support programs and facilities that are constitutional, ethical, safe, and cost-effective.
Enhanced organizational and professional performance in corrections.	...education and training in management, leadership, and specialized areas of corrections based on value-centered principles and best practices.
Community, staff, and offender safety.	...support for the use of correctional practices and procedures that reduce recidivism and hold offenders accountable.
Improved correctional practices through the exploration of trends and public policy issues.	...support for the research and study of corrections and the shaping of public policies that improve corrections practice.
Enhanced services through improved organizational and staff effectiveness.	...opportunities for organizational and professional growth through its extensive array of training programs and educational offerings.

- Pretrial Services.** The timely identification of risk factors in pretrial defendants can inform the pronouncements of judicial officers in their bail, supervision, and pretrial services decisionmaking. NIC provides support in the use of validated risk instruments in identifying defendant risk and ensuring community safety while upholding a defendant's Constitutional presumption of innocence.
- Workplace Learning and Staff Performance Enhancement.** Providing corrections professionals with a vast and varied stable of training and educational programs, NIC's Workplace Learning and Staff Performance Enhancement Initiative provides cost-free instruction and development materials for training directors/coordinators, trainers, curriculum developers, adjunct/part-time trainers, field training officers, and other stakeholders responsible for staff training in a correctional setting.
- Women Offenders.** NIC's Women Offenders Initiative focuses on addressing the risks, needs, and circumstances of women who make contact with the criminal justice system. With an emphasis on gender-responsive strategies, NIC supports the development of outreach, staff education, and offender programming targeted toward addressing the needs of this fast-growing segment of the inmate population. The National Directory of Programs for Women with Criminal Justice Involvement is one of the many direct outcomes and resources stemming from this initiative.
- Evidence-Based Practices.** An initiative supporting the increase and application of corrections research in the field, Evidence-Based Practices aims to elevate the profession and praxis of corrections by grounding its everyday methods and operations in proven research. As a result, NIC's programming, educational courses, and trainings are all based on research, applying the best of what works in corrections and corrections-related fields to agency and jurisdiction-wide processes.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

NIC offers complete descriptions of its courses and products, as well as full text of all NIC publications, on the NIC website at [www.nicic.gov](http://www.nicic.gov).

Connect with NIC by mail or phone at:

320 First Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20534  
Toll Free: 800-995-6423  
Fax: 202-307-3361

Reach the NIC Information Center online at [www.nicic.gov/ResearchAssistance](http://www.nicic.gov/ResearchAssistance). You may also e-mail questions about corrections and send requests for publications to [asknic@nicic.gov](mailto:asknic@nicic.gov).

## OVERVIEW

The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) is a small agency within the U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons. The Institute is headed by a director appointed by the U.S. Attorney General. An advisory board, consisting of 10 appointed members and 6 ex officio members, established by the enabling legislation (Public Law 93-415) provides policy direction to the Institute.

## HISTORY

In September 1971, a riot at New York's Attica prison focused national attention on corrections and the practice of imprisonment in the United States. In response to public concern about the handling of the riot by corrections administrators and elected officials, and recognizing the problems in corrections facilities and programs at the state and local levels, Attorney General John Mitchell convened a National Conference on Corrections in Williamsburg, Virginia, in December of that year.

In a keynote address at the conference, Chief Justice Warren Burger recommended the establishment of a national training academy for corrections that would:

- Encourage the development of a body of corrections knowledge, coordinate research, conduct executive seminars, and formulate policy recommendations.
- Provide professional training for corrections employees.
- Provide a forum and exchange for the discussion and evaluation of advanced ideas in corrections.
- Bring about the long-delayed and long-neglected professionalism of the field.

NIC was started in 1974 in response to this recommendation, with training as a primary function. It received its first appropriation in 1977.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The primary constituent groups in adult corrections—jails, prisons, and community corrections—are each represented and served by an NIC division. All adult corrections agencies are also served by the Academy Division, the NIC Information Center, and the Transition Offender Workforce Development Division, which contributes to the development of a research infrastructure for the field.

NIC's core staff is augmented by experienced correctional specialists on loan for two-year periods from state and local governments and others assigned from the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

- The **Jails Division** coordinates services to jail systems throughout the country. Its constituency consists of more than 3,300 county or regional jails, as well as state-operated jail systems, tribal jails, and police lockups.
- The **Prisons Division** coordinates services to state departments of corrections. Its constituency includes over 1,400 state prisons, the 50 departments of corrections that oversee them, and the corrections departments and facilities of the District of Columbia and the U.S. commonwealths and territories.
- The **Community Services Division** provides assistance to community-based corrections and workforce development agencies and programs. The product of the merging of NIC's Community Corrections and Transition and Offender Workforce Development Divisions, the Community Services Division supports pretrial, probation and parole, community corrections residential facilities, and other public and private community-based corrections programs. Major policy development initiatives include Evidence-Based Practices, Transition from Prison to the Community, and Transition from Jail to the Community. The division also provides technical assistance and training opportunities to a wide range of jurisdictions and organizations that influence or deliver community-based corrections and offender workforce development initiatives.
- The **Academy Division** coordinates most NIC training activities for executives, administrators, and staff trainers working in state and local prisons, jails, and community corrections. Through interagency agreements, it also provides training and related assistance to those working in juvenile corrections and detention, the federal prison system, and military corrections.
- The **Research and Information Services Division** coordinates the development of research, strategies, and protocols for corrections professionals in the field. Through sponsorship of the Institutional Corrections Research Network, NIC's Research and Information Services Division contributes to the development of a research infrastructure for the field.
- The **Information Center**, operated by a contractor, serves as the basis for information and materials collection and dissemination for NIC and as a national clearinghouse on corrections topics for the field.

## SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

The National Institute of Corrections is a source of assistance for corrections agencies at the state and local levels. Limited assistance is also provided to federal corrections programs. NIC's legislative mandates are to provide training, technical assistance, and information services, and to undertake policy and program development.

NIC employs a dual strategy of responding to critical needs of corrections agencies and proactively promoting change in the field. Programming is driven by actual needs facing state and local corrections administrators, as identified through focus groups, technical assistance requests, and "hearings" held by the advisory board to obtain practitioners' views.

The Institute's services focus on a wide range of topics and needs. A sampling of the Institute's initiatives includes:

- **PREA/Offender Sexual Abuse.** Enacted by Congress in 2003 to address the problem of sexual abuse against incarcerated persons, the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) supports the development of standards, tools, assistance, and information for public, private, and community-based institutions responsible for the care and safety of adult and juvenile offenders. Through cooperative agreements, NIC addresses staff sexual misconduct and offender-on-offender rape, focusing heavily on training, policy analysis and development, and enforcement of law and policy.
- **Mentally Ill Persons in Corrections.** The proliferation of mentally ill persons in the criminal justice system has placed the burden of treatment and care for these individuals in the hands

of corrections professionals. Only adequate training and information can equip today's correctional workforce with the tools they need to work with this ever-increasing population. NIC actively supports research and correctional training in this area with its many programs, courses, and the quarterly publication of the *Corrections & Mental Health Update*.

- **Norval Morris Project.** Strengthening the links between research and criminal justice in corrections, the Norval Morris Project aims primarily to support applied research and the use of evidence-based practice in correctional settings. The project also fosters alliance among correctional institutions and their stakeholders, from human service agencies to business community partners.
- **Offender Workforce Development.** Founded on evidence showing that offender unemployment places offenders at higher risk of recidivism, NIC's Offender Workforce Development Initiative works with correctional practitioners to develop strategies to improve employment outcomes for offenders. An integral part of this initiative is a training series that includes the following programs: Offender Employment Specialist (OES), Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS), and Offender Employment Retention (OER).

