

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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**CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND OPPORTUNITIES
FOR ADULT PRISONERS IN THE CUSTODY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**

**Prepared at the Request of
The Joint Standing Committee
on Criminal Justice**

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**By
The Maine Department of Corrections**

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The following report was generated in response to L.D. 77, which directed the Department of Corrections to develop a plan for the employment of prisoners at Department adult facilities. In order to satisfy the requirements of the report, a questionnaire was distributed to eight Department facilities: the Maine State Prison, Maine Correctional Center, Charleston Correctional Facility, Downeast Correctional Facility, Central Maine Pre-Release, Bangor Pre-Release, Bolduc Correctional Facility and the Maine Correctional Institution, Warren.

The report combines the responses received from each facility and adds, where appropriate, analysis and commentary to the information collected. Not all of the information received is in the report, and much of the data has been edited in the interest of consolidation.

THE REPORT

The total number of prisoners in custody at the time of the survey, March 10, 1995, was 1,408. Of that number, 1,083 were employed either full-time, part-time, on labor pool, or involved in vocational education.

Program distribution in all adult facilities by type of program is as follows:

<u>Programs</u>	<u>Number Prisoners</u>	<u>Number Hrs/Day</u>	<u>Number Days/Week</u>	<u>Pay</u>
Work Release M/F	90	8	5	\$4.25-8.00/hr
Repair Projects/Grounds	60	3-7	5	0
Restitution-Female	3	6.5	5	0
Restitution-Male	7	6	5	0
Farm	30	6-6.5	5	0
Boiler Room	26	3-7	5	0
Treatment Plant	8	6-7	5	0
Laundry	60	5-7	5	0
Garage/Motor Pool	33	3-7	5	0
Storeroom	19	3-7	5	0
School Crew	22	5-7	5	0
Industries	104	6-7	5	\$.35-1.75/hr
Kitchen	157	6-7	5	0
Barber	3	3-6.5	5	\$100.-120/month
Commissary	9	3-6.5	5	0
Cleaners	240	.5-4	5	0
Labor Pool	200	.25-6	5	0
Recreation	12	3	5	0

When prisoners are not working, they pursue a variety of other scheduled and non-scheduled activities, including educational activities, recreation (exercise machines, library, basketball,

television, reading, games, individual exercise, telephone privileges, etc.) visits, interviews, craft programs, treatment programs, religious activities and a variety of other pursuits such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. Generally, prisoners who are not working, or are not otherwise programmed, are confined to their housing unit or an adjacent supervised area.

At the time of the survey, 260 prisoners in the Department were not working at all, and the majority of them were either at the Maine State Prison (104) or the Maine Correctional Center (123). The reasons these prisoners were not working range from unclassified and unassigned status, medically restricted, segregated, Federal hold, and standby and reception status. While most of the prisoners in the Department are employed or programmed, a significant number are on half-day work assignments. At the Maine State Prison, for example, of the 426 prisoner population at the time of the survey, 320 were employed. However, only thirty-nine of that number were employed full-time, with 291 occupied on half-day assignments.

At the time of writing, there are approximately thirty-six so-called "light-duty" positions in five facilities. In addition, the Maine State Prison has prisoners performing light-duty responsibilities, but they are not officially designated as such. "Light-duty" is usually designated by the facility's medical department, and restricts affected prisoners to very limited physical activity. This limitation typically includes weightlifting and range-of-movement restrictions, and time-on-task and mental activity limits. Generally, light-duty positions do not require much physical and/or mental exertion. For example, typical light duties include folding laundry, cleaning and light housekeeping duties.

A relatively small number of prisoners, 143, are on a waiting list for work assignment, and the majority of those are at the Maine State Prison (50) and the Maine Correctional Center (84). The average wait for a job assignment is two to three months

JOB DESCRIPTION/RESPONSIBILITIES

The survey requested that each facility list and describe what each prisoner does in fulfilling the responsibilities of his/her job, and determine the impact if the facility were not able to employ prisoner labor; i.e., how many more cooks, electricians and general labor would that unit need to hire.

In order to avoid unnecessary duplication, using one facility as an example will indicate the degree of involvement prisoner labor takes in the running of an institution. The Bolduc Correctional Facility in Warren utilizes inmate labor extensively; in fact, the facility could not operate at all at its current level without inmate labor. If salaried employees were to replace the

present prisoner workforce, the facility would not be cost effective.

The following representative job descriptions and impact analyses of the Bolduc operation clearly show the cost advantage of inmate labor:

Tractor Crew - Job Description: The Tractor Crew is the primary inmate cadre compliment that is used to operate the major farm machinery. They are required to do the harrowing, disking, plowing, planting - all of our major heavy duty equipment needs. **Impact:** Without this crew we would be unable to conduct a large scale farm program. If we were to replace these prisoners with salaried workers, the farm program would not be cost effective.

Farm Crew - Job Description: The Farm Crew does most of the manual labor for the farming program. They weed, harvest, hoe, hand plant, bale hay, tend to cattle, sort beans and potatoes and all other manual labor tasks. **Impact:** Again, it would not be cost effective to replace these people with salaried employees.

Small Crop - Job Description: The Small Crop Crew does most of our large scale garden vegetable production, i.e., lettuce, cabbage, carrots/most of the salad bar items. They operate the green house, hand plant all the seedlings, weed, hoe and harvest these crops. The produce from this production is used entirely by the Maine State Prison and the Bolduc Correctional Facility. **Impact:** It would not be cost effective to replace these people with salaried employees.

Garage - Job Description: Four prisoners work in the garage. There is one full time welder, one wash bay man and two mechanics. Of course, most of their tasks are self-explanatory. These four men are supervised by the Garage Foreman, who is also a mechanic. **Impact:** In this particular situation, welding would have to be done by a private agency. Because we maintain a fleet of 50 vehicles and do all of our metal fabrication in this shop, another full time salaried mechanic to accommodate this workload would be necessary.

Locker Room, Lobby, Business/Personnel - Job Descriptions: These are cleaning positions. The inmates wash and wax floors, clean the rest rooms and perform general cleaning duties. **Impact:** Without prisoner assistance, we would need to hire at least one and maybe two, full time janitors to meet this need.

Small Equipment - Job Description: The prisoners that work on the Small Equipment Crew are required to provide outside ground maintenance for the three institutions. This would

include lawn mowing, raking, planting flowers, maintaining the ball field, snow shoveling, snow removal, small equipment repair, lawnmower repair, etc. **Impact:** At least two to three full time ground maintenance employees would be necessary to accommodate this work load. As previously stated, this program provides the ground maintenance for three institutions and their 30 support buildings.

Construction - Job Description: The prisoners assigned to the construction crew perform mostly carpentry work. This crew is responsible for construction maintenance for the three institutions and its accompanying support buildings. Their job assignments include construction, renovations, painting and building maintenance. **Impact:** In order to continue with the maintenance of these buildings, one full time carpenter and one full time laborer would be needed.

Grounds Crew - Job Description: The prisoners assigned to the grounds crew are responsible for all of our heavy duty grounds repairs. This would include our heavy trucking, bulldozer and backhoe work. This crew is also responsible for the wood harvesting and sawmill operation. We are currently working with the Department of Forestry and select cutting a 600 acre parcel of land that comes under the jurisdiction of the Bolduc Correctional Facility. The product from the lumber and sawmill operation is used on site at the three facilities. **Impact:** Without this crew, at least two full time construction laborers that had the ability and knowledge to operate heavy equipment would be needed. They would also be required to perform road maintenance, trucking, snow plowing and snow removal.

Labor Crew - Job Description: The prisoners assigned to the Labor Crew perform a variety of maintenance tasks. They provide back-up to most of the other crews. This past year they were farmers, roofers, painters and restitution workers. This crew is responsible for much of our recent public restitution. **Impact:** While elimination of the labor crew would have relatively little impact on the facility because the crew has no specific job function, it would impact the community: public restitution projects depend heavily on the labor crew.

Work Release - Job Description: The prisoners working on Work Release at the Bolduc Correctional Facility are assigned to the prison Plateshop. This work concerns primarily the metal fabrication of license plates for the Secretary of State. **Impact:** There would be little impact on the Department of Corrections if these positions needed to be replaced by full time salaried workers. However, the State would be impacted, as monies for these positions are reimbursed by the Secretary of State.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The survey next requested the number of prisoners involved in vocational education programs and a list of those programs. Of the eight sites surveyed, five have vocational education programming, for a total of 124 inmate participants. The description of these programs are as follows:

<u>Program</u>	<u>Number Prisoners</u>	<u>Number Hrs/Day</u>	<u>Number Days/Week</u>
Building Trades	22	6	5
Auto Body	6	6	5
Auto Mechanics	4	6	5
Plumbing/Heating	6	3-6	1-5
Culinary Arts	7	6	5
Electrical Trades	16	3-6	5
Business Education	11	6.5	5
Fleet Maintenance	7	6.5	5
Graphic Arts	7	6.5	5
Meatcutting	5	6.5	5
Sawmill Operation	9	7	5
Woodharvesting/Forestry	12	7	5
Welding	12	3-4	5

Because the prisoners involved in vocational education programming are occupied full-time or full-time equivalent, they generally are not given other work assignments.

ACADEMIC EDUCATION

Many prisoners in Departmental institutions are involved in academic education programming. In the eight sites surveyed, seven have academic programs with a total involvement of 300 prisoners.

Academic program description together with hourly and daily enrollment figures are as follows:

<u>Program</u>	<u>Number Prisoners</u>	<u>Number Hrs/Day</u>	<u>Number Days/Week</u>
Remedial reading/ Adult Basic Education	44	1-4	3-5
G.E.D.	83	1-3	3-5
College	19	3	2-3
Computer	54	3	2-3
Parenting Skills	20	2	2-3
Career Education	20	2	2-3
Creative Writing	5	*	*

Paralegal Studies	2	*	*
Women's Studies	3	1	3
Reading Circle	13	2.5	1
Helping Incarcerated Parents (H.I.P.)	23	3	1
Other (chess, pottery, music, etc.)	46	--	--

*These are MCI correspondence courses studied individually at various times.

Of the above listed prisoners who participate in some form of academic programming, 106 also have regular full or part-time work assignments. The majority are excused from their assigned jobs to attend academic coursework; the remainder are either on labor pool or attend school as a full-time activity.

RESTITUTION PROJECTS

Most of the facilities in the Department of Corrections participate in restitution projects. These projects involve prisoners in civic and community work activities, which at one time occupy the inmate's time, instill a sense of community responsibility and greatly benefit local towns, municipalities, non-profit agencies and, occasionally, other State departments. Some examples of restitution projects are as follows:

<u>Project Recipients</u>	<u>Facility</u>	<u>Project Description</u>
Fire Department - Town of Addison	DCF	Fabrication of 2300 gallon water tank
Town of Veazie	CCF	Remodeling of town office, police & fire departments
Ronald McDonald House	BPRU	Grounds maintenance & painting
Maine State Police Troop S Headquarters	BCF	Total renovation of current facility: walls, roof, plumbing & air conditioning
Dry Mills Game Farm/ Hatchery	MCC	Handling fish, cleaning fishways, vehicle repair
Inland Fisheries & Wildlife	DCF	Bear trap repair
General Knox Mansion -		Exterior renovation

(Montpelier) Thomaston	BCF	of entire mansion
Orono High School	CCF	Installation of handicap railings
Towns of Poland, Lebanon, Windham & Naples	MCC	Construction of ball fields, painting, metal recycling & cleaning
Dover-Foxcroft Boy Scouts	CCF	Reroofing of Boy Scout building

The following restitution project statistics reflect the investment in time, monetary value and personnel each facility has made in recent years:

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Years</u>	<u>Number of Projects</u>	<u>Number of Prisoners*</u>	<u>Number of Hours</u>	<u>Value (at \$4.25/Hour)</u>
BCF	1993-95	1	20	26,460	\$112,455.00
DCF	1994-95	116	80	32,454	\$137,929.50
MCC	1992-95	78	100 (est)	53,753	\$228,450.25
BPRU	1992-94	26	140	45,385	\$192,886.25
CCF	1992-94	119	833	37,820	\$160,735.00

*It should be noted that most prisoners participated in several projects.

WORK RELEASE

Four facilities in the Department of Corrections sponsor Work Release programs. Work Release is available to prisoners who have approached the end of their sentences and who have demonstrated a good institutional behavior pattern. Work Release is intended to gradually integrate prisoners into society and acclimate them to the world-of-work. Relatively few inmates reach Work Release status, but those who do are provided the opportunity to be gainfully employed, usually at a business in the community, to save money for the transition back to society. Moreover, a prisoner who is earning money in the community is able to provide sustenance for his family, reimburse the State for room, board and medical expenses, and pay court-ordered restitution and taxes.

Work Release statistics from the Maine Correctional Center, Bolduc Correctional Facility and Central Maine and Bangor Pre-Release Centers indicate a small but productive number of prisoners successfully re-entering society. There are a total of 92 inmates currently on Work Release status (84 men, 8 women). They work in a wide variety of occupations, ranging from heavy construction, poultry processing, automotive body work, food service and bowling

alley maintenance, to canoe fabrication, lumber mill operation, license plate manufacturing, plumbing and heating, and landscaping.

There are seventy-seven prisoners working full-time (70 men, 7 women) at a pay range of between \$4.25 and \$8.00 per hour. Their average weekly gross pay is from \$170.00 to \$320.00.

EXPANSION PLAN

Prisoner employment is viewed by the Department of Corrections as crucial to the management of the facilities, and contributes to the process of addressing specific skill deficits of the offender. Many adult prisoners in the custody of the Department begin their sentences without a work history, or, more often, with low-skill-level, sporadic employment patterns. The consequence of this is a prisoner population without a concept of the work ethic. As a result, they approach prison jobs as they have approached their lives, without commitment or a sense of responsibility. It is therefore the responsibility of individual facilities to provide as many full or part-time jobs as possible, and to approach the goal of full employment for all prisoners. Unfortunately, reduced funding has seriously impacted the Department's ability to reach that goal. Correctional and Vocational Trade Instructor positions have been cut, employment and training programs have been eliminated, and equipment expenditures have been seriously reduced. As a result, too many prisoners spend too much time under-employed, or worse, not employed at all. The only exception to this problem is found at the pre-release centers in Bangor, Hallowell and Windham, and at the Bolduc Correctional Facility. All the prisoners at these facilities are employed at some occupation all the time.

In its final section, the survey asked each facility what would be necessary for full employment of all prisoners, minus the estimated number that could not work for various reasons. The questions in that section ranged from the description of proposed work and training programs, to the benefits and projected cost of those programs. Facility responses to those questions are as follows:

Location - Maine State Prison

Program - Develop a new industrial program

Description - Conduct research, renovate space and develop a new product and/or service program.

Benefits of plan - Employ an additional 30 prisoners. Develop marketable skills and good work habits. Produce a product or provide a service which will bring in revenue.

Number of jobs created -

30

Costs of program -

<u>Personnel</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Personal Services</u>
2	Correctional Trades Instructor	\$65,000.00
<u>Capital items</u>		<u>Capital Costs</u>
Renovations		\$306,450.00
<u>All Other</u>		<u>All Other Costs</u>
None		None

Location - Department-wide

Program - Six General Work Crews

Description - General work crews clean, paint, repair, perform manual labor such as clearing brush, working in composting and recycling operations for departmental facilities, other State agencies, municipalities, etc.

Benefits of plan - Currently, requests for work to be performed in our own facilities and other State agencies, local municipalities and towns, and non-profit organizations exceed the limitations of existing crews. If we had more work crews employing minimum security prisoners with additional supervisors, and the crews were able to work on a full-time basis, our ability to respond to the requests we receive would be greatly improved. Instead of some agencies having to wait a long time for a project to even begin, we could respond in a timely manner. Not only would that provide help to agencies who are not in a position to complete these projects within their current budgets but it would also give the prisoners on the work crews the experience and work ethics necessary to reduce recidivism.

Number of jobs created -

30

Costs of program -

<u>Personnel</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Personal Services</u>
6	Correctional Trades Instructor	\$198,000.00
<u>Capital items</u>		<u>Capital Costs</u>
4 vans		\$57,600.00
Composting building		\$25,000.00
Composting equipment		\$30,000.00
<u>All Other</u>		<u>All Other Costs</u>
Miscellaneous hand tools		\$2,000.00

Location - Maine Correctional Center

Program - Establish a system to respond to telephone requests for information about tourist attractions in Maine.

Description - Prisoners would answer toll-free telephone line requests for information about Maine tourist attractions, lodging, etc. (Although the staff to prisoner ratio is high, it is quite possible that, if the number of queries is high, more prisoners could be employed with the same number of staff supervisors.) Coverage would be 24 hours per day, every day of the year.

Benefits of plan - This program would be patterned after those now operating in other state correctional facilities. Prisoners learn marketable work skills and Maine would save countless dollars of expense.

Number of jobs created -
10 (minimum)

Costs of program -

<u>Personnel</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Personal Services</u>
5	Supervisor	\$161,055.00
<u>Capital items</u>		<u>Capital Costs</u>
Equipment and furnishings		\$40,000.00 (estimated)
<u>All Other</u>		<u>All Other Costs</u>
None		None

Location - Maine Correctional Center

Program - Expand the Upholstery Industry

Description - This would be a teaching as well as work program. Prisoners would learn pattern-making, cutting, fitting and sewing.

Benefits of plan - Will teach very marketable work skills for use upon release. Also would produce saleable items which would create revenue.

Number of jobs created -

10

Costs of program -

<u>Personnel</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Personal Services</u>
1	Industrial Shop Supervisor	\$32,211.00
<u>Capital items</u>		<u>Capital Costs</u>
None		None
<u>All Other</u>		<u>All Other Costs</u>
Supplies		\$5,000.00

Location - Maine Correctional Center

Program - Hog, cattle and vegetable production expansion

Description - This would be an expansion of activities which currently exist.

Benefits of plan - Food products would be produced, thus saving State money. Prison workers would learn good work habits and some basic skills.

Number of jobs created -

10

Costs of program -

<u>Personnel</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Personal Services</u>
1	Correctional Trades Instructor	\$29,100.00
<u>Capital items</u>		<u>Capital Costs</u>
None		None
<u>All Other</u>		<u>All Other Costs</u>
Ankle bracelet monitors		\$12,000.00

Location - Maine Correctional Center

Program - Vocational Trades Programs

Description - These are training programs which prepare the prisoner students for entry level jobs in the respective trades. Three programs are proposed:

1. Welding and Metal Product Fabrication
2. Building Trades
3. Auto Repairing and Reconditioning

Benefits of plan - These programs not only would prepare the students for work when released but also, during the training, products are made and sold and services performed for a fee which could subsidize the program.

Number of jobs created -

18

Costs of program -

<u>Personnel</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Personal Services</u>
3	Vocational Trades Instructor	\$109,500.00
<u>Capital items</u>		<u>Capital Costs</u>
None (programs were operational in the past)		None
<u>All Other</u>		<u>All Other Costs</u>
None (see Capital)		None

Location - Bolduc Correctional Facility

Program - Expand farm operations

Description - Expansion would be in several areas:

- A. Increase the production and processing of dry beans
- B. Establish a food processing unit to make, freeze and store such items as french fries
- C. Expand the apple orchard from about 150 to 500 trees
- D. Add 2 additional greenhouses. These would be heated by a wood fired plant, utilizing fuel from the wood harvesting program

Benefits of plan - These programs would compliment each other by providing year-round employment for prisoners whereas now the farming operation is quite seasonal. In addition, saleable crops and products would be produced.

Number of jobs created -

10

Costs of program -

<u>Personnel</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Personal Services</u>
2	Correctional Trades Instructor	\$60,000.00
<u>Capital items</u>		<u>Capital Costs</u>
Food processing equipment		\$30,000.00
Other equipment will be bought with farm income funds		None
<u>All Other</u>		<u>All Other Costs</u>
Miscellaneous equipment		\$10,000.00

Location - Maine State Prison

Program - Expand woodworking program

Description - Employ more prisoners in the current shop

Benefits of plan - This would teach additional prisoners woodworking skills and would produce some additional items for sale.

Number of jobs created -

5

Costs of program -

Personnel

None

Title

Personal Services

None

Capital items

None

Capital Costs

None

All Other

None

All Other Costs

None

**PRIVATE SECTOR PRISON INDUSTRY
ENHANCEMENT CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

Although not included in L.D. 77 as one of the areas for exploration, we believe it is important to point out that the Department of Corrections is one of the few correctional jurisdictions in the United States which are certified under a special federal program.

The Private Sector Prison Industry Enhancement Certification Program

The Private Sector Prison Industry Enhancement Certification Program, commonly known as the PIE program, was created at the federal level by the Justice System Improvement Act of 1979. This legislation provides an extension from federal constraints on the marketability of prisoner-made goods by permitting their sale in interstate commerce. The correctional industry has also been permitted to bid on federal contracts.

Benefits of certification

The program enables states and counties to experiment with new models of prisoner employment. Certified industries attempt to establish employment conditions which approximate those in the private sector, often making use of private capital and management skills.

Victims of crime are compensated for their loss.

Prisoner job skills increase, thus potentially increasing the possibilities for successful rehabilitation and the chances for meaningful employment upon release.

Tensions are reduced in participating institutions as idleness decreases.

Project workers alleviate some of the cost of incarceration by contributing room and board and family support payments and becoming taxpayers.

Eligible projects

Individual project certification: a single facility based business cost accounting center.

Department certification: a state or local industry plan for the designation, administration and management of one or more correctional facility based cost accounting centers.

Legislative and administrative criteria for participation

Statutory authority to administer prison industry programs is in place;

Contributions to victims compensation or victims assistance programs of not less than 5% nor more than 20% of gross wages are authorized;

Consultation with organized labor and local private industry takes place prior to project start up;

Prevailing wages are paid;

There are proper assurances that the certified program will not result in the displacement of employed workers;

Prisoner participation is voluntary;

Provision has been made for the compensation of injured workers; and

There is some involvement of the private sector such as purchasing, managing, planning, etc.

Deductions allowed

The statute allows a series of deductions from wages earned by prisoners. Permissible deductions include room and board, taxes, family support and victims compensation. All deductions must not total more than 80% of gross wages.

Benefits of participation

The Private Sector Prison Industry Enhancement Program is capable of providing something for everyone:

For the corrections administrator, a cost-effective way to occupy a portion of an ever growing prison population;

For the public, a way to reduce the escalating cost of incarceration, and to expand the available supply of goods and services;

For the innocent victims of crimes, a means of partial reparation; and

For the prisoner a chance to maintain some tie to normalcy and to responsibly meet financial obligations while incarcerated.

The Maine Department of Corrections is, as far as we are aware, the only correctional jurisdiction in the United States which is authorized to include county jail work programs under its certification.

Maine certification provides for an unlimited number of cost centers. The cost centers established to date are:

The License Plate Shop at the Bolduc Correctional Facility

An Industrial Stitching Program at the Maine Correctional Center

A Bulk Mailing Program at the Kennebec County Jail

A Bulk Mailing Operation at the Cumberland County Jail

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