

National Institute of Corrections

Staffing Analysis –
Virtual Instructor-Led Training,
Development and Pilot Delivery Program
(CFDA #16.601)

Executive Summary
prepared by participant agency

Hampden County Sheriff's Office
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NIC Virtual Instructor-Led Training (VILT)
Consultant Team

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Background

From April 1 through May 25, 2021, the Hampden County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) participated as one of four Commonwealth correctional agencies in the Virtual Instructor-Led Training (VILT) Staffing Analysis Pilot Program coordinated by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC).

The pilot project involved a 'deep-dive' analysis into front-line and supervisory security staffing at the HCSO main correctional facility; the Stonybrook Correctional Center. As detailed in the chapters of the attached report, the HCSO strictly adhered to the techniques and processes prescribed by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) Staffing Analysis training program (the Virtual Instructor Lead Training [VILT] program). Per VILT instruction, the following areas were assessed as primary components of the staffing analysis: facility profile, facility activities, security post assessment, shift relief factor and facility coverage plan. In turn, these areas were analyzed in light of several factors, including the correctional facility's mission statement, size (number of inmates), inmate programs, security level(s), and physical plant limitations.

Several important findings arose from the pilot project. These findings are detailed in the attached report including the corresponding methodology, data collection, and resultant analysis for each of the component areas listed above. Below offers a brief summary of the full report.

Facility Profile

The Hampden County Sheriff's Office's Main Institution located in Ludlow, MA is a medium/maximum security facility housing both pre-trial and sentenced individuals. The average count in 2020 was 753 male residents. The facility is comprised of seven buildings, three of which are housing towers for pre-trial detainees and sentenced inmates. The facility is divided into 24 living units under a Unit Management/Direct Supervision mode of operation.

The HCSO philosophy is that re-entry into the community begins on day one of incarceration, and the intent of the correctional facility is to begin a continuum of return to the community as law-abiding, productive citizens. Sentenced inmates are expected to maintain rigorous levels of

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participation in productive activities within the facility that include both job assignments and programs. All inmates participate in a Basic Inmates' Intensive Regimen, and continue with programs that address their risks and needs in substance use, education, employment, anger management and victim awareness. These programs include both high school and college level classes, recovery groups, AA, NA, domestic violence classes, and fatherhood classes among others. The Main Institution also offers several vocational programs to help build marketable skills for employment post-incarceration. These programs include, but are not limited to, carpentry, welding, graphics, culinary arts, OSHA certification, embroidering, printing, manufacturing, and an arbor program. A comprehensive listing of programs available at the Main Institution is provided in Appendix C of the full report.

The Hampden County Sheriff's Office subscribes to the standards of the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC), American Correctional Association (ACA), Department of Corrections (DOC), Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), Bureau of Substance Abuse Services (BSAS), Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), and the Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMRs). All of these standards are recognized in the corrections profession as supporting sound correctional operations.

The Main Institution possesses a rated capacity of 962 with a current population of 620 individuals. The FY20 Average Daily Population was 753. The Main Institution is a medium/maximum facility with multiple layers of physical security, including a double fence with in-ground electronic sensors, Constantine wire, a central control room, cameras, internal and external gates, movement checkpoints, towers, control stations and internal/external perimeter patrols. In addition, various levels of intrusion detection and perimeter security measures provide for sufficient barriers to detain or delay any elopement attempts.

The HCSO Director of Research closely collects, monitors and analyzes data on inmate characteristics and trends to allow the HCSO to provide for the appropriate level of inmate management and program availability. The last several years have witnessed a large increase in violent offenses and a significant decrease in drug related offenses amongst the HCSO inmate population. Despite the decrease in drug related *offenses*, over 90% of the inmate population self-reports substance use issues, and even more disturbing, just over 40% of the population has been diagnosed with significant mental health issues.

Activity Schedule

Over 80 inmate activities and programs as well as all major security-related activities occur within the correctional facility, each influencing workload and scheduling of staff. The VILT analysis consisted of listing all facility activities, and charting these by time of day and number of hours per activity in an effort to thoroughly evaluate facility efficacy. Investigation into the facility activity schedule revealed that the HCSO possesses a peak activity time of 6:00am-6:00pm, and that it retains a successful history of providing inmate and security activities with the appropriate level of staffing for peak and non-peak times.

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Security Post Evaluation

Both front-line and supervisor security posts were assessed, inclusive of ascertaining fixed posts, as well as posts that can be "pulled" or "shutdown", when needed during periods of staff shortage. This required a review of all post orders, job descriptions and constructing prototypical posts. The VILT assessment process revealed that the HCSO maintains written post orders and job descriptions for all posts and ranks, respectively, and that the proper number of posts were in use. One recommendation for change arose regarding security coverage: based on workload, the Special Operations and Central Control Room should no longer assume coverage for the Intake

Area on weekends. This change has been implemented, and the HCSO will monitor the implementation of the change to verify that it yields the intended result.

A second recommendation for change arose regarding a function issue with a limited number of duress pens. This was corrected and shall be monitored in the future.

Shift Relief Factor

Continuous post assignment coverage requires more than one full-time (FTE) employee, and the calculation of a Shift Relief Factor (SRF) proves invaluable when applied to the number of minimum posts assignments. By applying the SRF to the required security posts, an accurate accounting of the number of employees needed to minimally operate the correctional facility is obtained. An accurate SRF also ensures fiscal accountability with respect to personnel expenditures. Lastly, by analyzing the individual line items in an annual SRF calculation a solid historical database of employee absences from work is obtained, which in turn, accurately identifies trends in employee absence from work. This “trend analysis” directs management decision-making efforts in minimizing the financial impacts of the various employee absences from work (such as identifying and addressing increasing trends in worker’s compensation leave, military leave, sick leave abuse, etc.).

Consistent with the direction and goals of the VILT training program, the HCSO applied the NIC approved SRF formula to ensure accurate relief factors for its security posts. The specific posts for which a shift relief factor was determined included the following employee positions: uniformed correctional officer, uniformed correctional caseworker (CCW) and uniformed Supervisor. Below is the three-year average SRF for the aforementioned employees.

Employee Position:	Shift Relief Factor 4+2 Work Schedule, Seven-Day Post	Shift Relief Factor 5+2 Work Schedule, Five Day Post
Correctional Officer	2.10	1.37
Uniformed Supervisor	2.25	1.45
Corr. Caseworker (CCW)	N/A	1.09

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When applying the corresponding SRF to uniformed staff assigned to a 4 day-on and 2 day-off work schedule, as well as a 5 day-on and 2 day-off work schedule, the total number of uniformed correctional employees required to adequately staff the correctional facility is 372.88 full-time equivalent staff (FTE). Appendix E, column “1”, provides a breakdown of FTE’s by work post.

As noted in the chart, the average total compensation package for a line correctional employee (correctional officer and corporal) is \$63,828.12, and the total compensation package for a uniformed supervisor (sergeant, lieutenant, captain, primary captain and major) is \$86,320.60.

Based on the average compensation package for each employee group, the total annual personnel cost - the combination of wage and benefits - is \$24,741,230.13.

For the seven (7) years prior to the VILT pilot project, the HCSO employed the NIC process for calculating SRF, and applied the annual SRF results to both facility and budget operations. Accordingly, this task was completed prior to the inception of the current pilot program.

Coverage Plan

The HCSO adhered to the tools and processes provided by the VILT pilot program to analyze and evaluate its facility coverage plan. This involved synthesizing all factors previously mentioned in this Executive Summary with the ultimate goal of charting a precise, cost-effective coverage plan. In turn, this process took into account the facility's mission statement, size and composition of the incarcerated population, the security and program level(s), and physical plant limitations. As evidenced in the attached chapters, *Coverage Plan*, and *Findings and Recommendations*, the staff coverage plan currently in place at the HCSO main correctional facility met the requirements as delineated by the pilot project.

Findings and Recommendations

By employing the objective assessment and evaluation tools provided by the VILT Staffing Analysis Training Program, and applying these to the operational components defined by the VILT team (facility profile, facility activities, security post assessment, shift relief factor and facility coverage plan), the result was a high degree of confidence in the Hampden County Sheriff's Office ongoing staffing coverage plan. This likewise translates to budget accountability as related to personnel costs. These findings are further supported by the examples cited in the full report. Lastly, these findings are buttressed by the fact that the dispassionate VILT process provided a consistent measure by which different correctional staffs, as well as different correctional facilities, may be empirically and impartially assessed on the same foundation and analytics.