

# The Compiler

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

Summer 1998

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## The rising number of female offenders in the criminal justice system



Members of Women for Sobriety at Logan Correctional Center near Lincoln help each other deal with their addictive behaviors. It is one of several programs designed to help female offenders overcome problems that led to their incarceration.

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Created in 1983, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority is a state agency dedicated to improving the administration of criminal justice. The Authority works to enhance the information tools and management resources of state and local criminal justice agencies, and it serves as a statewide forum for criminal justice coordination, planning, and problem solving. It also is responsible for research, information systems development, and administration of federal anti-crime funds. The Authority's specific powers and duties are spelled out in the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Act [20 ILCS 3930/1 et seq.].

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority is governed by a 15-member board of state and local leaders from the criminal justice system, plus experts from the private sector. Authority members help develop priorities and monitor their progress. The agency's day-to-day work is carried out by a full-time professional staff working out of the Authority's Chicago office.

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### Marlin joins Authority as Acting Director of the Illinois State Police

Gene Marlin was recently appointed acting director of the Illinois State Police, and in that capacity has taken a position on the Authority. Marlin replaced former ISP Director Terrance Gainer, who left May 31 to take a position with the Washington Metropolitan Police Department.

Marlin, 56, began his career with the Illinois State Police in 1963 as a trooper assigned to patrol duties in northern and central Illinois districts. He served in the Division of Administration Personnel Bureau from 1975 to 1985. He later served as Deputy Superintendent for the Division of Criminal Investigation, Operational Service Command, and in 1987 was named Superintendent of the Division of Administration. He was named First Deputy Director of the agency in 1991, and served as second-in-command until his appointment as Acting Director May 29.

### Program evaluations summarized in *On Good Authority*

*On Good Authority*, a series of reports on criminal justice issues published periodically by the Authority, has been revamped. In addition to a new design, the reports are now being used to summarize lengthy program evaluations funded by the Authority. These four-page reports are intended to disseminate information from the program evaluations to a wider audience. The full evaluation reports are also available from the Authority.

In addition to program evaluations, *On Good Authority* will continue to focus on criminal justice trends in Illinois and research being conducted by the Authority. Since May, the following *On Good Authority* reports have been published:

- Homicide task force helps solve tough cases in St. Clair and Madison counties
- Combating the high murder rate in East St. Louis: a look at two programs
- Chicago arrestees surveyed on use, prevalence of guns
- Evaluations of the Sheriff's Work Alternative Programs in Madison and Adams counties
- Trends in Illinois crime: 1993-1997
- Sex offender treatment at the Illinois Youth Center-Harrisburg

### Authority to sponsor safety exhibit at State Fair

Once again, visitors to the Illinois State Fair can look for the towering McGruff the Crime Dog balloon to find the Authority's tent and safety exhibit. The fair runs Aug. 14-23.

Self defense and child safety demonstrations will be part of the exhibit, as well as a McGruff puppet show. The Authority's Research and Analysis Unit will have a computer demonstration where visitors can find crime statistics for their communities.

# Trends among female offenders in Illinois

Increasing numbers of females have entered the criminal justice system during the last several years. More and more women are being arrested and, consequently, officials are also seeing increasing trends in the numbers placed on probation caseloads and in the numbers being held in correctional facilities. The added burden of more people in the system is compounded by the special

circumstances and needs frequently presented by this population.

Statewide arrest data by gender is not available. The arrest data presented in the following graphs was provided by the Chicago Police Department and covers only the City of Chicago. Information presented on adult probationers was derived from data provided by the Probation Division of the Administrative Office of

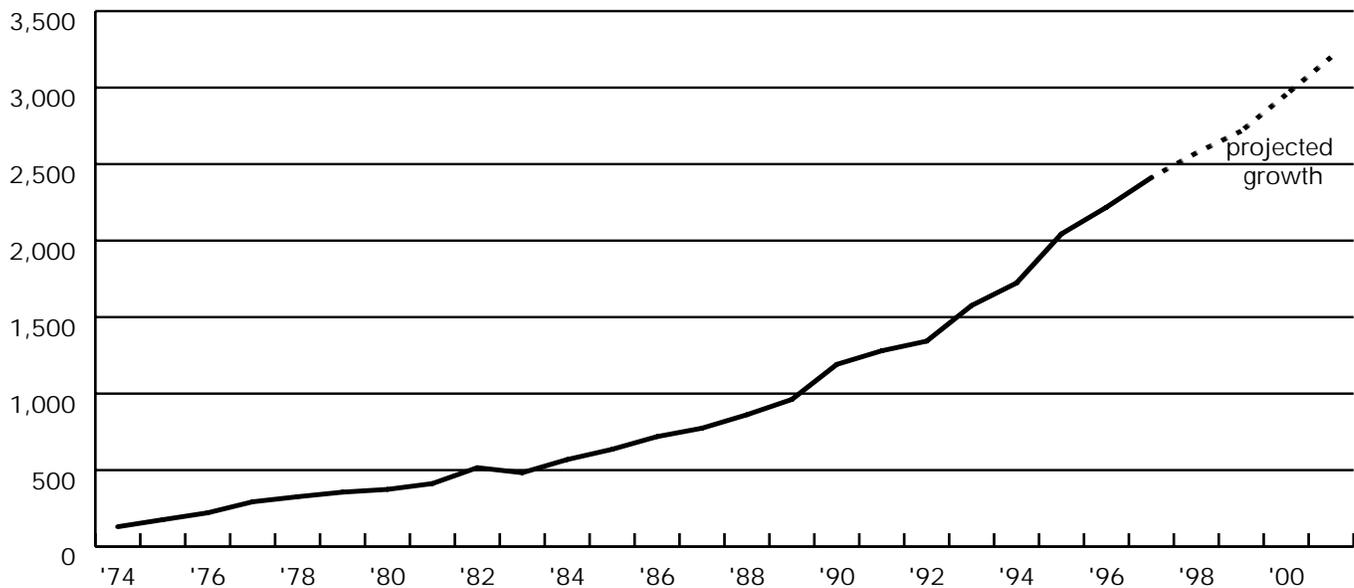
Illinois Courts. The Illinois Department of Corrections is the source for data on persons sentenced to their custody.

These data confirm a growing volume of female offenders in the Illinois system. More importantly, these data also indicate that incarcerated women and women placed on probation differ from their male counterparts in terms of prior criminal history and socio-economic backgrounds.

For the figures on pages 3-8, information on the prison population was compiled by staff Research Analyst John Doyle; information on probation was compiled by David E. Olson, Ph.D., assistant professor of criminal justice at Loyola University Chicago; and the information on Chicago arrests was compiled by staff Criminal History Auditor Steven Bivens.

Figure 1

## Female inmates at the Illinois Department of Corrections



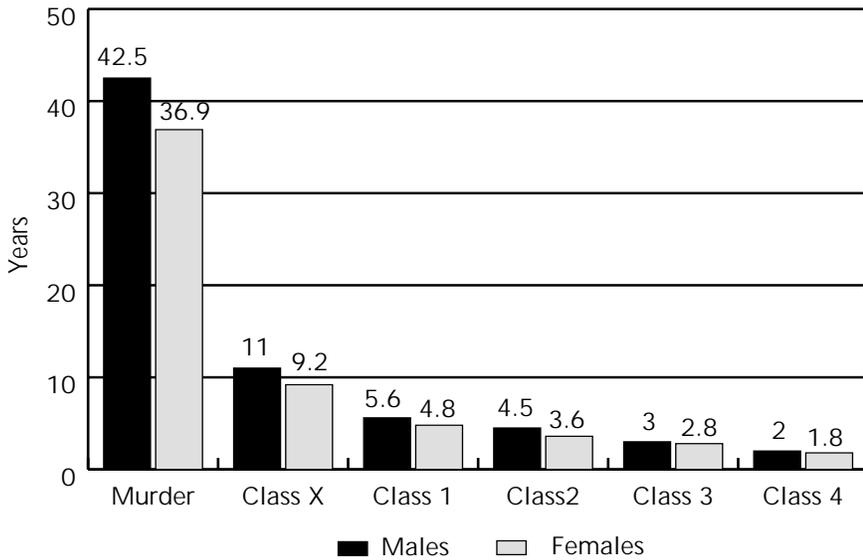
Source: Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC)

Figure 1.

In the past three decades, the female inmate population of the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) has soared by more than 1,700 percent. From 130 women in the system in 1974, the female population grew to 2,412 in fiscal year 1997. (By contrast, the male population increased 536 percent during the same period, rising from 5,971 inmates in 1974 to 38,014 in 1997.) A significant portion of this growth occurred in the last seven years, when the female population more than doubled. IDOC has projected that by the year 2001 the female population will rise to almost 3,200.

Figure 2

Average sentence lengths of inmates admitted to the Illinois Department of Corrections in 1996



Source: IDOC

Figure 2.

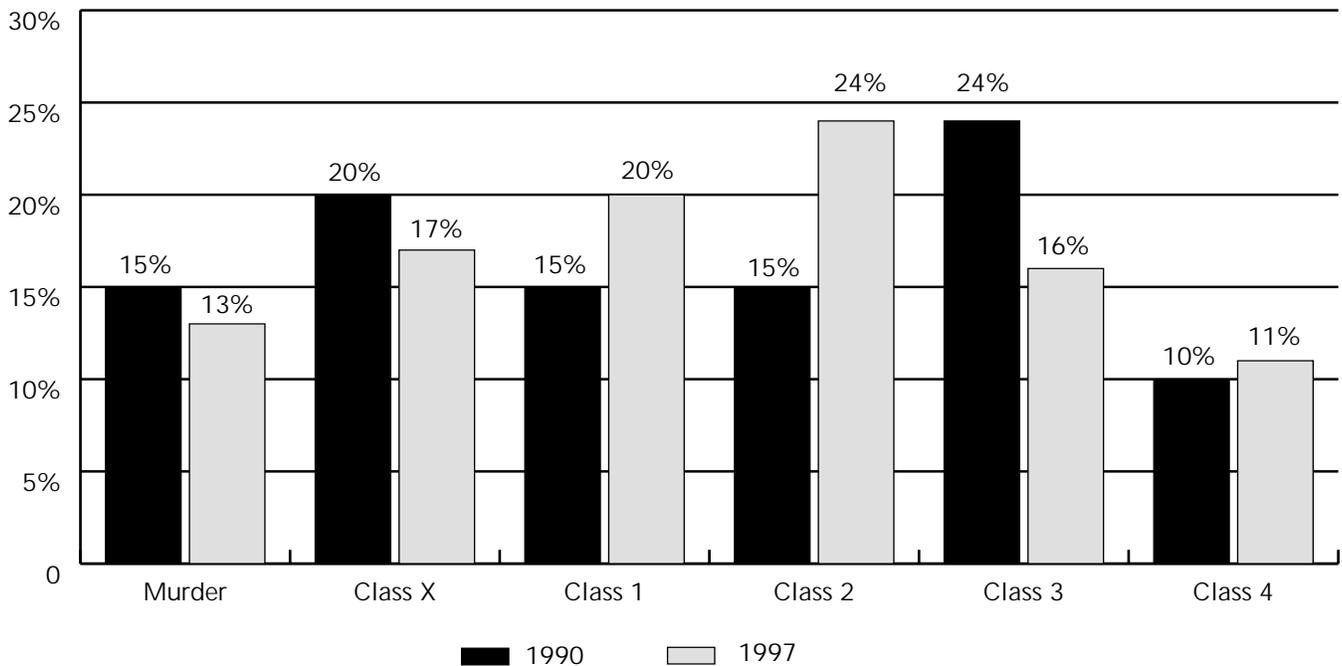
Among inmates admitted to IDOC during state fiscal year 1996, women had slightly shorter prison sentences compared to men imprisoned for the same class of offense. On average, sentences for women were 18 months shorter than sentences for men. About a third of the men were serving time for murder, Class X or Class 1 offenses, compared to one-fifth of the women. At the same time, more than three-fourths of the women were serving time for Class 2, 3, or 4 offenses, which are primarily drug and property offenses.

Figure 3.

In 1996, 44 percent of the female inmates at IDOC were serving time for drug crimes, compared to 25 percent in 1993. Between 1990 and 1997, the number of women incarcerated for Class 1 offenses more than doubled, and for Class 2 offenses the number more than tripled. While the number of women incarcerated for violent offenses decreased between 1990 and 1997, women were increasingly imprisoned for more serious offenses.

Figure 3

Classification of offenses for women at the Illinois Department of Corrections, 1996



Source: IDOC

As with men, the majority of women convicted of crimes in Illinois courts receive probation sentences. In 1995, an estimated 9,100 adult women were placed on probation in Illinois, compared to 2,044 female inmates at IDOC that year. Between 1990 and 1995 in Illinois, the proportion of adult probationers accounted for by women increased from 15 percent to 19 percent.

Data collected by the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC) Probation Division during 1995 provides some insight on the female probationer population. The average age of both men and women on probation was 30 years old, and 56 percent of both genders were white.

**Figure 4.**

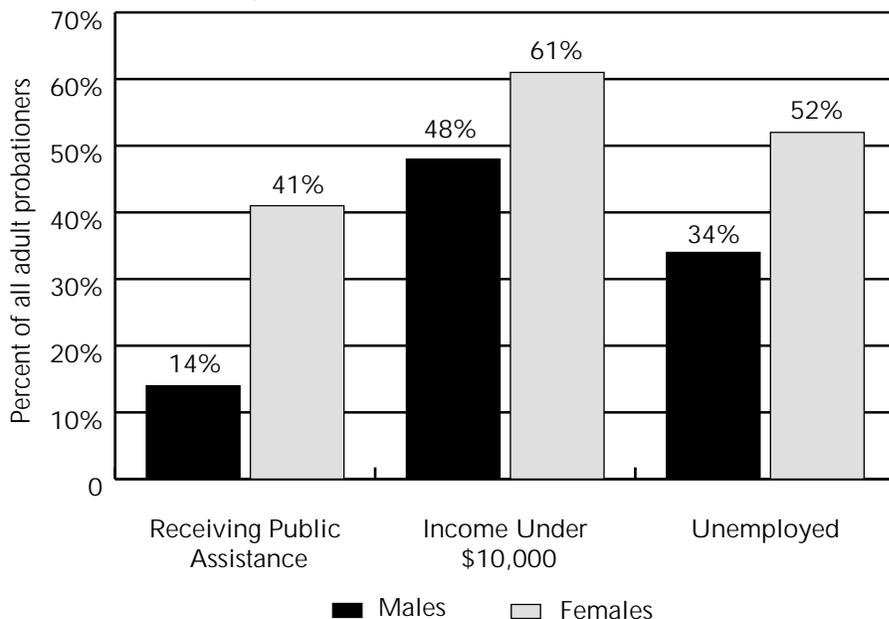
While no differences were evident between men and women in terms of their educational achievement, considerable differences were noted when various economic measures were considered. Women were much more likely than men to come from families receiving public assistance, and they also reported lower family incomes. Differences in public assistance and incomes were attributable to differences in the employment status of men and women probationers.

**Figure 5.**

Differences were also noted with respect to the type of offense that resulted in the probation sentence. Women were more likely than men to be on probation for property or drug offenses, whereas men were more likely than women to be on probation for violent crimes or driving under the influence. Almost 44 percent of the women probationers were convicted of drug offenses, compared to 38 percent of the men.

**Figure 4**

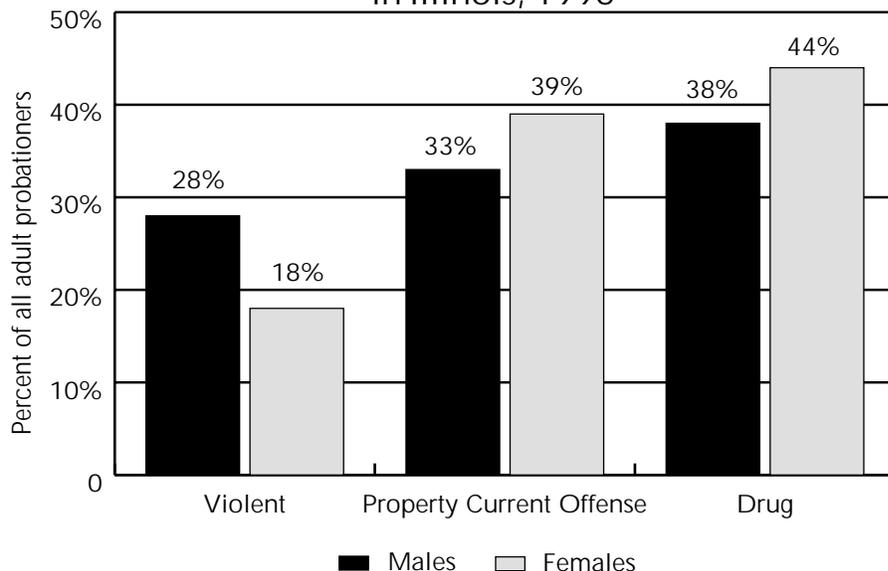
**Economic conditions of adult probationers in Illinois, 1995**



Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC) Probation Division

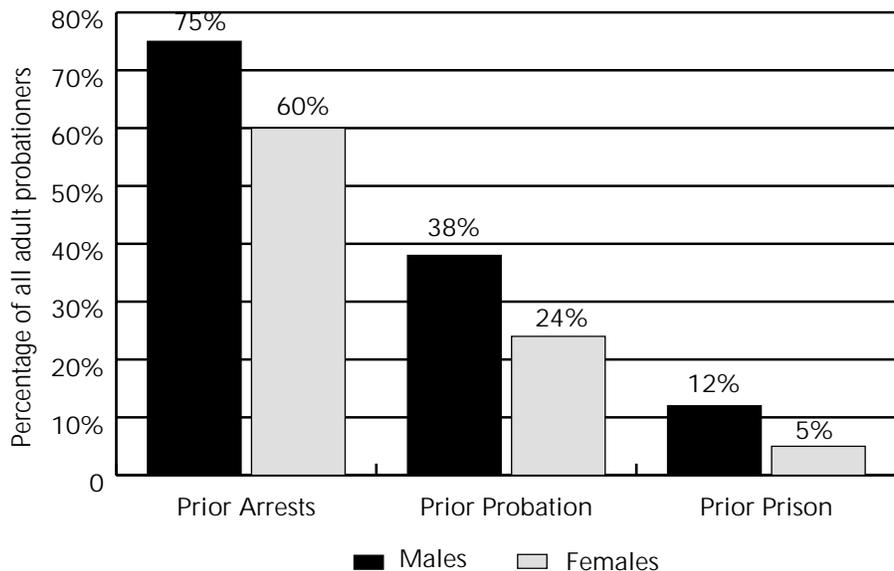
**Figure 5**

**Offenses of adult probationers in Illinois, 1995**



Source: AOIC Probation Division

Figure 6  
 Prior criminal histories of adult probationers in Illinois, 1995



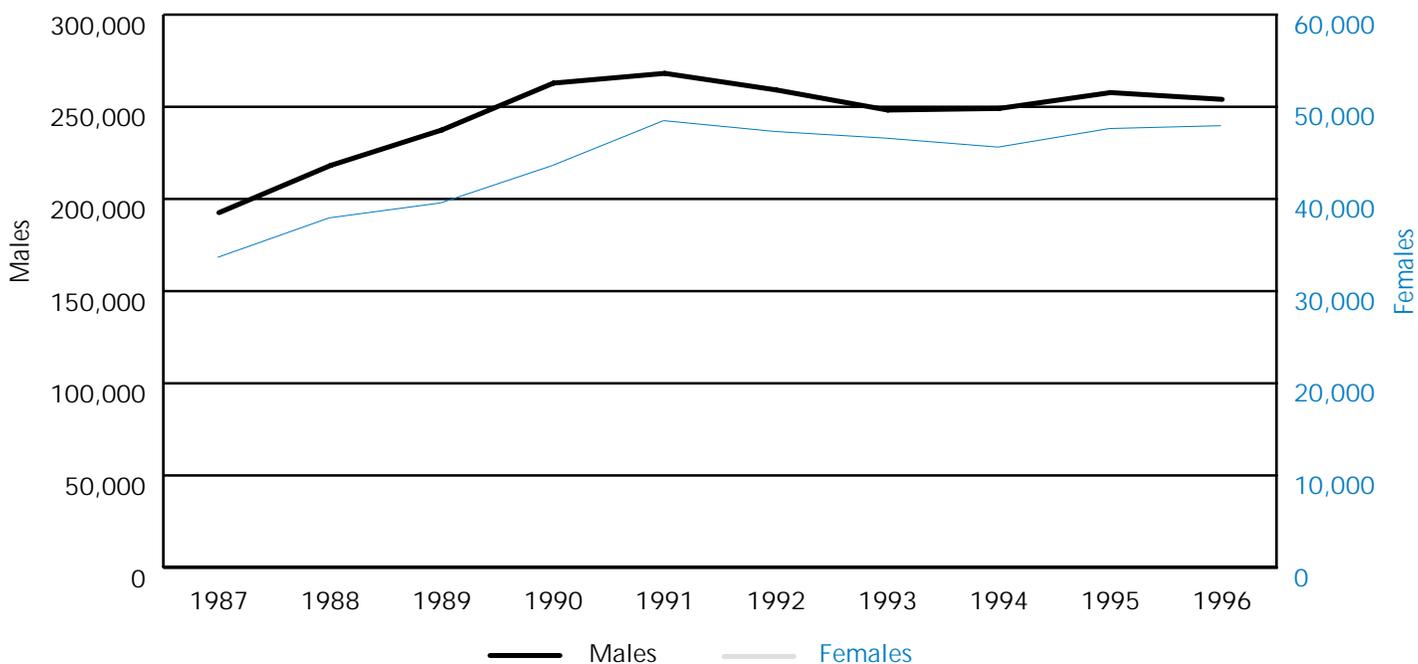
Source: AOIC Probation Division

Figure 6.

Female probationers had less extensive criminal histories than male probationers. For example, 40 percent of the women had no prior arrests, compared to 25 percent of the men. In addition, 38 percent of the men had previously been on probation, while fewer than 25 percent of the women had prior probation sentences.

Few differences were evident between men and women regarding characteristics and conditions of current probation sentences. When taking into account differences in the offenses for which they were convicted, the average lengths of probation sentences for men were either the same or slightly longer than for women. Similarly, there were only slight differences with respect to probationers being ordered to pay probation fees, perform community service, or participate in substance abuse treatment programs.

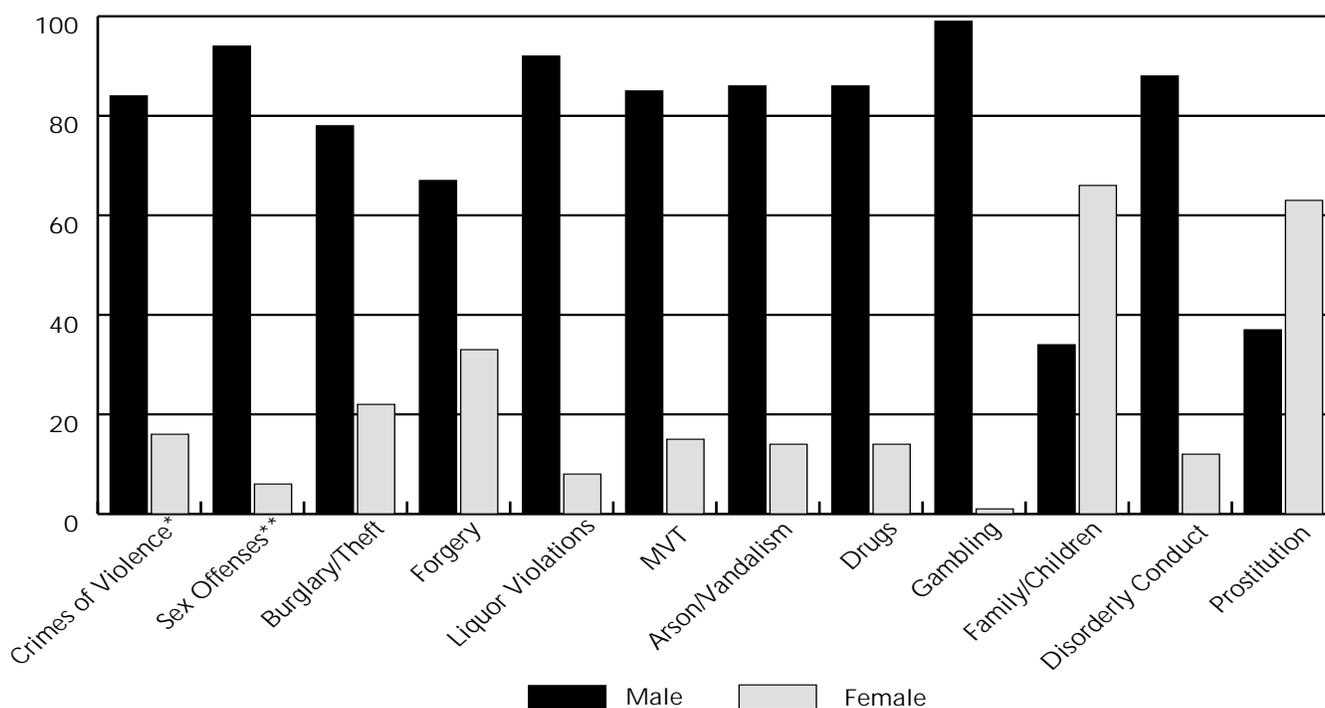
Figure 7  
 Chicago Police Department arrests by gender



Source: Chicago Police Department

Figure 8

Chicago Police Department arrests by offense, 1996



\*Includes murder, manslaughter, criminal sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault and other assaults

\*\* Except criminal sexual assault and prostitution

Source: Chicago Police Department

Figure 7.

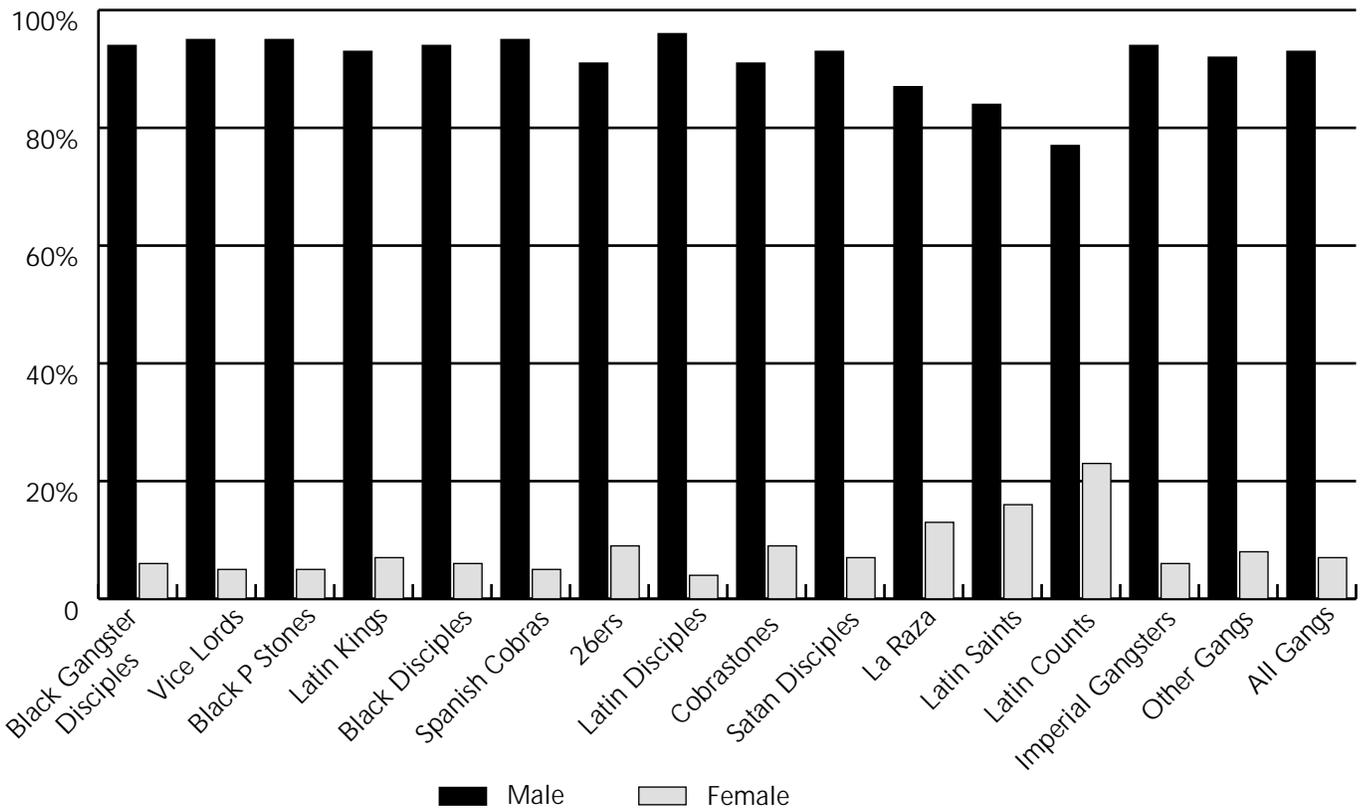
The rate of increase in arrests among women in Chicago has outpaced that of men in recent years. Between 1987 and 1996, there was a 31 percent increase in the number of men arrested by the Chicago Police Department, rising from 192,568 arrests in 1987 to 254,037 arrests in 1996. The number of women arrested during this period increased by more than 42 percent, going from 33,571 arrests in 1987 to 47,853 arrests in 1996.

Figure 8.

In terms of individual arrest offenses in Chicago, males account for the largest proportion of people arrested. The exceptions are prostitution and crimes dealing with families and children, which includes child abuse, child abduction, child pornography, and sexual abuse of a family member.

Figure 9

Chicago Police Department street gang arrests by gender, 1995



Source: Chicago Police Department

**Figure 9.**

Ninety-three percent of all gang members arrested by Chicago police in 1995 were males. This figure, however, varied among individual gangs. For members of the La Raza, Latin Saints, and Latin Counts gangs, for example, 17 percent of those arrests were women. Total arrests for these three gangs, however, equated to only 13 percent of all gang-member arrests for that year.

# Prison programs reflect the needs of an increasing female inmate population

By Karen S. Levy McCanna

The population of female prison inmates has increased 200 percent in Illinois over the past 10 years, rising from 774 female inmates in 1987 to 2,412 in 1997. This is more than double the rate of increase for the male inmate population for the same time period. The Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) expects the trend toward higher rates of female incarceration to continue. A primary reason for this increased growth rate is the increase in arrests and convictions for drug-related offenses for women.

IDOC houses female inmates in four facilities: Dwight Correctional Center, an all female facility; Dixon Correctional Center, a co-ed facility; Logan Correctional Center, a co-ed facility; and the Kankakee Minimum Security Unit, a satellite to Dwight. A new female facility is scheduled to open in Decatur in 1999.

Most female offenders bring a variety of social and personal problems with them when entering state incarceration. A 1995 IDOC inmate profile illustrates the types of problems female offenders typically wrestle with:

- 80 percent have a substance abuse history;
- 80 percent are the head of a single-parent household; and
- 54 percent have less than a high school education.

Correctional services for these women are needed to treat medical problems, family problems and problems directly related to criminal behavior patterns. Programs made available by IDOC for institutionalized females address a wide variety of these issues. Some of the programs available include counseling for substance abuse, medical treatment, parenting skills classes, and academic and vocational education.

## Counseling

Individual and group counseling programs are available to inmates who have substance abuse histories or have particular issues to address, such as separation from a child or domestic abuse. Counseling options include one-on-one services or group sessions with a licensed professional.

Self-help groups are also available, utilizing volunteers from the community or peer counselors. These groups work with the women to assist them in acquiring positive alternatives to the behavior patterns that contributed to their incarceration. Programs such as Drug Education, Alcohol/Narcotics Anonymous and Gateway all strive to teach inmates productive behavior patterns associated with a drug-free lifestyle.

Many women entering prison are leaving abusive living conditions and need support services that address the emotional experience of victimization. These programs complement the services

already available through psychiatric clinics, therapy groups and individual therapy sessions.

## Single parents

IDOC currently houses 1,908 female inmates who are single parents. These women are often leaving behind children who must be cared for by relatives, friends or social service agencies. The separation causes frustration and anxiety that may become heightened over time. Programs designed to help women and their children better deal with this anxiety include parenting skills education classes and visitation of the children arranged through social service agencies.

The special needs presented by incarcerated mothers and their children are part of the focus of program planning for the Decatur Correctional Facility. "When you lock up women, you lock up their kids," Warden Daria McCarthy-Smith said. In preparation for the opening of the Decatur facility, McCarthy-Smith is utilizing an interdisciplinary team of professionals to identify needs particular to women and design service programs to target those needs.

At the Logan Correctional Center, with the help of Lutheran Family Services of Illinois, imprisoned mothers and fathers can record themselves reading a children's book as part of the Storybook Project. The book and the recording are then sent to their children. This program enables par-

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*Karen S. Levy McCanna is a research analyst with the Authority.*

Year	Number of babies born to women within IDOC
1993	54
1994	62
1995	52
1996	64
1997	51

ents to interact with children who may not be able to visit the institution.

Another program for women at the Dwight and Kankakee facilities allows children to camp with their mothers one weekend a year. Throughout the summer months, small groups of mothers and their children camp on the grounds of the Dwight Correctional Center. The children are transported onto the grounds of the facility and spend the weekend with their mothers participating in activities under the supervision of correctional personnel.

### Educational programs

Educational programs are also available to female inmates of IDOC. Those women who do not yet have a high school diploma may attend classes to prepare for the GED exam. Inmates who wish to further their education beyond high school are offered classes from universities contracted with by the IDOC school district. Both Lewis University and MacMurray College offer certificates of completion, associate's degrees, and bachelor's degrees to male and female inmates who meet the program qualifications. As of December 1997, Lewis University had graduated 81 men and women with associate's degrees, 91 students with degrees in applied science, and 43 students with bachelor's degrees.

Areas of study through the colleges include Food Service Technology, Commercial Custodian, Business Management, Horticulture and other vocational fields. These programs are designed to help inmates learn a trade, as well as further academic achievements. With these marketable skills, offenders will have more employment choices after they are released.

### Health care

Health care programs are also offered to female offenders through the medical units at each correctional facility. Along with the regular medical services provided to all inmates, AIDS/HIV education programs and gynecological services are offered. The services include an annual health fair, educational materials and referrals to community facilities for extended services.

Those women who give birth while residing within the IDOC system are provided with prenatal care on site and transported to a community hospital for the delivery. Once released from the hospital, the new mother is returned to confinement and the child must be cared for by a relative, friend or social service agency. There is currently a minimum security, community-based program serving the needs of some pregnant inmates,

which allows women time to bond with their newborn babies.

### Activities and services

Full library services and a variety of leisure activities and religious services are also provided through various IDOC programs. Women have the opportunity to participate in sports, special events, Bible study and church services among other activities. Library services include access to periodicals, audio/visual equipment, inter-library loans, and legal assistance from inmate volunteers experienced with the legal reference materials.

IDOC program services are aimed at giving female offenders the skills required to succeed outside the institutional setting. Providing women with the services needed to improve their educational level, health, and parenting skills helps them avoid committing criminal offenses. ■

# New correctional program will serve female inmates who are victims of abuse

By Shelley Fulla

Programs addressing domestic violence and sexual assault are being developed all over the United States. These programs assist victims in overcoming their victimization and help them through the criminal justice process. Some special populations, however, are often forgotten, including incarcerated females. The Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), with the assistance of Violence Against Women Act funding, has developed a program that targets this special population.

## Available data

Nationally, women comprise only about 11 percent of the prison population. However, their numbers have almost tripled over the last 10 years. As of June 30, 1996, Illinois had the seventh-largest female prison population in the United States, at 2,218. Given the current growth trend, it is estimated that the female population in IDOC will reach 4,301 by the year 2002.

A survey by the U.S. Department of Justice found that 43 percent of female inmates were physically or sexually abused at least once before their present sentence. Fifty-six percent of the abused women said the abuse involved rape, and another 13 percent reported an attempted rape. Often, the abuser was someone the victim knew. These figures are important because

of the high correlation between victimization and maladaptive behavior, such as passivity and dependency.

Between November 1994 and June 1995, data on abused inmates was collected at Dixon Correctional Center in northern Illinois. In all, 118 women completed the survey. Seventy percent of these inmates reported being victims of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, and 86 percent of the women who reported being abused requested to see a mental health professional.

The typical female inmate in IDOC is black, in her early 30s, and a single mother from Cook County. These women enter IDOC with a history of substance abuse and are typically convicted of nonviolent offenses. The majority of Illinois' female inmates are unmarried mothers averaging three children each. The children may be placed with relatives or in foster homes during the incarceration, but they will often be reunited upon the mother's release. Further, many of these women are "functionally illiterate," that is, they have basic literacy skills but enough of an inadequacy to effect job performance and everyday living. These women have the lowest educational skills and are at the greatest risk of recidivism.

## IDOC's pilot program

After examining the available data, and through our understanding of Rape Trauma Syndrome (RTS) and the cycle of violence, it is clear that there are additional obstacles to women who are incarcerated

and who are also victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. Upon release, a woman may return to a dangerous living environment because available housing is limited. If this woman has children, it further complicates the situation. Living with an abuser exposes her children to the cycle of violence and places the woman at high risk of being victimized again.

To address some of these problems confronting female inmates, IDOC worked with the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault and the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence to develop a program to provide direct services to nonabusive inmates (no history of domestic violence or sexual assault offenses). This program, which is in its formative stages, will establish an identification and referral process for victim-specific education, case management, and group and individual counseling opportunities for female offenders. The program also will provide IDOC staff with cross-disciplinary training on victims, types of services available, and female offenders as victims. The provision of services will be initiated when the women enter IDOC. The program is designed to provide these services through the incarceration phase and into the community.

## A continuum of care model

In developing a continuum of care model, three types of facilities were chosen as target sites: Dwight Correc-

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*Shelley Fulla is a grant monitor with the Authority.*

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## **This program provides the corrections community with the opportunity to properly identify and provide services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.**

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tional Center, Kankakee Minimum Security Unit, and West Side Community Correctional Center. Dwight is the only all female prison in the state and the only intake unit for adult female offenders. Kankakee is a minimum-security prison for women serving terms of six years or less. Many of the women incarcerated at Kankakee are eligible for work release or electronic detention. West Side is a work release center for men and women in Chicago designed to help prison releasees make a successful return to the community. Many of the residents maintain full-time employment. Having the pilot program at three facilities with different levels of security allows IDOC to provide direct services to inmates at different stages of incarceration.

To provide effective services to the female inmates, IDOC will contract with nonprofit service providers. The service providers will be responsible for hiring and training victim services specialists who will work with IDOC to identify and provide services to the female inmates at the three facilities. At the intake stage, inmates are administered a series of psychological, educational, and medical assessments. In addition, the victim services specialists will conduct voluntary,

confidential interviews that will allow the specialists to detail the extent, type, and duration of abuse.

### **Four ongoing components**

Once identified as a victim of domestic or sexual abuse, the inmate will participate in the four primary components of the program: education, group counseling, individual counseling, and case management. All components are ongoing. The education component will consist of brief orientation presentations that identify the services available, and information will be provided on the dynamics of both sexual assault and domestic violence.

Immediately following enrollment in the program, inmates will meet with a victim services specialist for a needs assessment, which will help identify treatment goals and objectives to continue recovery and healing. Each inmate's progress will be reviewed on a regular basis. A critical element of the case management process is the linking of supports for the woman who will be released directly into the community. These referrals and connections in the community will be identified prior to release.

Individual counseling sessions will be held so that the inmate is able to address specific issues surrounding her victimization, including fear of being victimized again, anger control, family dysfunction,

peer support, and basic life skills. Group counseling sessions will be conducted so that the women can cultivate cohesion and support among group members.

### **Staff development**

A unique element of this program lies in its education of IDOC staff. Most of the staff members do not have expertise in services to victims. It is often difficult to even view the inmate as a victim. IDOC has recognized this difficulty and will conduct a training session for staff to educate them on the dynamics and impact of victimization, responding to a victim's psychological trauma, and forms of abuse. Such training will enhance the sensitivity of staff members to inmate needs and help inmates get appropriate services.

The implications of this program are far-reaching. This program provides the corrections community with the opportunity to properly identify and provide services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. With treatment and case management, IDOC is giving female inmates a chance to overcome their victimization. Furthermore, if an inmate is provided with adequate education, services and support, it is hoped she will have the necessary skills to break the cycle of violence. With this, the inmate is ensuring the safety of her children as well as protecting them from repeating the cycle. Through this program, women will be enabled to return to society with a better chance of survival. ■

# Sobriety program provides strength to women at Logan Correctional Center

By Linda Ketcham

At 4 p.m. each Monday, a dozen women leave their housing units at Logan Correctional Center in Lincoln to attend a Women for Sobriety (WFS) meeting. There are more than 360 registered Women for Sobriety groups in the U.S. This is the only one in the country being offered within a prison.

Founded in 1975 by Pennsylvania sociologist Jean Kirkpatrick, and based on the premise that the cause, progression, and recovery of addiction is different for women than for men, WFS is one of the first significant alternatives to traditional 12-step recovery groups. Based on her own treatment experiences, including 12-step, Kirkpatrick felt that there was a void in traditional treatment programs.

Like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), WFS emphasizes abstinence, the use of meditation, and the importance of spirituality in recovery. WFS, however, places the focus in recovery on empowerment and self-esteem rather than on the surrendering of personal power. In essence, the therapeutic component in Women for Sobriety is in learning to take control of one's life. The WFS "New Life Program" emphasizes the importance of understanding the woman as a whole person. As one woman at Logan who attends both Narcotics Anonymous (NA) and WFS described it,

"WFS focuses on me as a whole person while NA focuses on me as an addict."

At the core of the program are the Thirteen Statements of Acceptance, or affirmations, designed to teach women how to change their view of themselves

and the world around them. Group members are encouraged to get up early each morning to read the 13 affirmations and to choose one to consciously use throughout the day. At the end of the day, they are to reflect on the statements they selected.

## 13 Affirmations of Women for Sobriety

1. I have a life threatening problem that once had me.

*We now take charge of life and our disease. We accept the responsibility.*

2. Negative thoughts destroy only myself.

*Our first conscious sober act must be to remove negativity from our lives.*

3. Happiness is a habit I will develop.

*Happiness is created, not waited for.*

4. Problems bother me only to the degree I permit them to.

*We now better understand our problems and do not permit problems to overwhelm us.*

5. I am what I think.

*I am a capable, competent, caring, compassionate woman.*

6. Life can be ordinary or it can be great.

*Greatness is mine by a conscious effort.*

7. Love can change the course of my world.

*Caring becomes all important.*

8. The fundamental object of life is emotional and spiritual growth.

*Daily I put my life into a proper order, knowing which are the priorities.*

9. The past is gone forever.

*No longer will I be victimized by the past, I am a new person.*

10. All love given returns.

*I will learn to know that others love me.*

11. Enthusiasm is my daily exercise.

*I treasure all moments of my new life.*

12. I am a competent woman and have much to give life.

*This is what I am and I shall know it always.*

13. I am responsible for myself and for my actions.

*I am in charge of my mind, my thoughts, and my life.*

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Linda Ketcham is a certified addiction counselor and moderator for the Women for Sobriety program at Logan Correctional Center

In addition to the affirmations, program literature includes several books by Jean Kirkpatrick, audio tapes, a monthly newsletter, booklets addressing different recovery issues, and a program booklet interpreting each of the affirmations. To ensure continuity, groups are led by a certified moderator. And in keeping with WFS's emphasis on overall health, meetings are chemical free: no smoking, no coffee, and no snacks.

## Thinking positive

Most groups begin with the moderator reading the WFS Statement of Purpose, and then group members take turns reading the affirmations. In sharp contrast to 12-step meetings, in which members introduce themselves by saying "my name is...and I'm an alcoholic," members in WFS groups introduce themselves by saying "my name is...and I'm a competent woman." As part of their introduction, members are encouraged to give themselves a positive "stroke." This is often difficult for women, many of whom see themselves as failures. On those occasions when a member is able to share an important achievement, however, the applause affirms her competency.

After the introductions, members may briefly discuss any issues they have had to deal with and how they used the affirmations to cope. WFS encourages conversation, feedback and advice from other members. The focus of the WFS program is on creating a "new life." Meetings do not include sharing drinking and drug use histories. Discussion of past behavior typically occurs only to offer a benchmark for progress rather than an experience in humility.

The remainder of the meeting is spent discussing a topic chosen at the previous meeting, such as relationships; taking responsibility for thoughts, feelings, reactions and behaviors; violence; family of origin issues; forgiveness and empathy. Relationships, both inside and outside the institution, are frequent topics of conversation, and are especially important given

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**Of the 15 members who have been released from prison, three have reportedly relapsed, several others have become involved in other WFS groups, and one former member of the Logan group has become a certified moderator and has established a group in her home community.**

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the high percentage of incarcerated women who are survivors of abuse.

Lee Ann Kaskutukas (1996) suggests that women-only groups can be particularly helpful for women whose addictive behavior is rooted in sexuality or gender issues, family problems or poor self-esteem. Many of the women in the Logan group reported feeling safer discussing such issues in an all-women group. Many of the women also reported having felt awkward and vulnerable in mixed-sex, 12-step groups when approached for a date. For survivors of abuse, exploitation by male group members is a very real concern and risk.

## Not a typical WFS group

The group members at Logan are not representative of other WFS groups. According to Kaskutukas, most WFS members are white, educated, affluent, middle-aged, married with children, and addicted to drugs or alcohol. In contrast, the WFS members at Logan are approximately 60 percent African-American, 40 percent white, and range in age from 20s to mid-50s. Many of the group members at Logan were raised in economically disadvantaged households and had not completed high school at the time of their incarceration. Most of the women were single parents and survivors of abuse.

Many of the women started their drug use at an early age. The drug of choice among WFS members varies. Many of the

women used crack-cocaine, others used heroin, marijuana, alcohol or a combination of these and other drugs. Some of the WFS members at Logan have experienced other types of addictive behaviors, including shopping, theft, and thrill seeking.

Kaskutukas found that 40 percent of the women in WFS reported that they had tried either professional help or some other form of self-help prior to coming to the group. More than half of the women in WFS, regardless of AA affiliation, had already been sober for an average of 2.5 years prior to coming to WFS. This suggests that women in WFS do not attend meetings merely to achieve sobriety, but, perhaps as previously stated, to focus on themselves as a complete person.

Kaskutukas also found that relapse was less common among women who attended both AA and WFS than for women who attended either exclusively. She reports that women involved in WFS maintained their sobriety at about the same rate as women who attended AA meetings. Most of the women involved in the Logan group attend both WFS and 12-step groups.

## At Logan since 1996

WFS has been meeting at Logan since 1996, and approximately 40 women have participated since that time. There are currently 13 women participating in the group — the maximum number recommended for WFS groups to allow ample

time for all members to share — and there is a waiting list. Of the 15 members who have been released from prison, three have reportedly relapsed, several others have become involved in other WFS groups, and one former member of the Logan group has become a certified moderator and has established a group in her community.

As important as WFS is, it is not enough to ensure the long-term health and recovery of female addicts. The purpose of treatment should be to address drug abuse in the wider context of overall health, relationships, and society. The treatment should focus on the woman as a complete individual, not just as an addict.

The national Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) and the U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections (NIC) have suggested that services to women that only focus on alcohol and drug use are likely to fail. Effective programs for incarcerated women include gender-specific substance abuse treatment; parenting and family preservation; economic survival and basic life skills training; sexual abuse and domestic violence counseling; safe, affordable housing upon release; and the development of a strong case management component.

In 1995, The Infant-Parent Institute Inc., based in Champaign, worked cooperatively with the Illinois Department of Corrections and Logan Correctional Center to develop a program based on the needs of incarcerated women. The proposed “Expedited Case Management” program would address the multiple problems facing women in prison by focusing on the provision of services and referrals to appropriate agencies and services prior to and upon release from prison. The program would assess inmate needs and connect them with appropriate services both in and out of the institution. In addition, the program would serve the children of incarcerated mothers, particularly those residing with relatives and family friends. By working with the whole family, rather than only focusing on the offender, this unique program attempts to



Photo by Daniel Dighton

***The author, third from left, serves as moderator at a recent Women for Sobriety meeting at Logan Correctional Center near Lincoln.***

break the cycle of offending that often occurs in families. While the program was developed in 1994 and approved by the Illinois Department of Corrections in 1995, funding for the project has not been secured.

As the number of women incarcerated for drug-related offenses increases, so does the need for appropriate, gender-specific programming. Historically, researchers in both criminal justice and substance abuse have ignored women. The result of that neglect has been the consistent and often inappropriate application of treatment technologies to women.

According to Bill White, in a report entitled “Keeping hope alive: treating multiple problem clients and families,” presented at the annual conference of the Illinois Alcohol And Other Drug Abuse Professional Certification Association in 1995, effective programs address three questions: 1) How do we understand the forces behind the onset of addiction; 2) How do we intervene and treat the acute stages of addiction; and 3) How do we support long-term recovery. Gender-specific programs address these questions,

placing the client’s needs first. Women for Sobriety and the Expedited Case Management program are two examples of gender-specific programs that address these questions by focusing on the whole woman. ■

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# Boot camps becoming more common alternative for female offenders

By Kristine T. Hamilton

**C**rowding in our jails and prisons has led Illinois to explore alternatives to traditional incarceration. Of particular interest have been programs that use structure, discipline and challenge to change offender behavior in a positive way, while also helping to reduce the ever-increasing prison population.

Boot camp programs generally target young, nonviolent, first-time offenders. Participants have historically been overwhelmingly male, but because of the growing number of female inmates, and because boot camps allow both genders the same opportunity to complete their incarceration after approximately 18 weeks, the number of women seeking and gaining admission to these programs is increasing.

Illinois' Impact Incarceration Program (IIP) was established in 1990 in Dixon Springs as a prison alternative for nonviolent, first-time offenders under the age of 30 with a sentence of five years or less. In 1993, the eligibility criteria were expanded to include second-time prison offenders under the age of 36 who received sentences of up to eight years.

Since the first IIP was opened in 1990, IDOC has opened two other boot camp facilities. The only one housing women, however, is the Dixon Springs facility, which has been steadily expanding. When the facility began operations in 1990 there were 10 beds for women. In

1993, as a result of the new eligibility criteria, that number rose to 24, and, in 1995, a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice allowed the addition of 26 more beds. A new building for female inmates was constructed last year.

## Equal opportunity

According to the Illinois Department of Corrections' 1997 report to the Governor and the General Assembly, the typical female IIP inmate is black, 25 years old, has an 11th grade education and a history of substance abuse. The majority of female inmates have been convicted of Class 1 or 2 drug offenses, and have sentences of 4.5 years. If IIP is recommended by the sentencing judge, the Receiving and Classification Unit at Dwight Correctional Center determines the further eligibility of the inmate. After an interview and orientation, inmates can indicate that they are interested in participating in the program. Medical screening is then conducted to ensure that inmates are physically able to participate in the rigorous structure of the program. Candidates are placed on a waiting list while awaiting entrance into the IIP at Dixon Springs.

Once in the program, the women are expected to participate in the same drills, vigorous exercise and activities as their male counterparts. However, except for some classroom and counseling sessions, the women are separated from male inmates throughout the entire program.

Superintendent Jim Suits, who has been at Dixon Springs since the program

began in 1990, said some women may choose traditional incarceration (particularly if they are given a shorter sentence) because they might feel that they cannot meet the physical demands of the program. Ironically though, the women who enter the program have a lower "quit rate" than the men, Suits said.

## Specific needs of women at boot camp

According to Diane Schingel, an IIP substance abuse counselor, most women in the program enter with substance abuse problems. After they are evaluated, the women receive substance abuse counseling from the time of admission through a post-release period. Intensive individual and group therapy sessions are required for the duration of the program. Since most of the women will return as the primary care giver to their children, the program incorporates parenting classes designed to instill courage, self-esteem, understanding, and responsibility. If at any point during the program a female inmate makes a statement or it is otherwise determined that she has a specific problem, such as a history of physical or sexual abuse, she is referred to the appropriate therapy.

According to Suits, most of the women in the program will be the sole source of financial support for themselves and their children. A focus of the program is to prepare these women for such responsibilities. Depending on the inmates' academic needs, instruction is given in

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five general areas: math, science, English, social studies, and literature and the arts. For women who will be leaving without a GED high school equivalency degree, plans are made to continue education and obtain a GED.

Mandatory life skills education instills a positive value structure and knowledge base for the women when they return to society. They are introduced to the services available to them in the community, and they learn more about job-searching techniques, such as interviewing skills and personal grooming. They also learn how to contact and access the services of state agencies such as the state departments of Children and Family Services, Public Aid and Human Services.

As inmates prepare for release, they work with staff members to prepare an individual development plan, which will identify post-release needs. Upon release from the boot camp, offenders participate in an intensive community supervision program, which is intended to provide education and assistance in securing community-based services upon release. Electronic monitoring is sometimes used during this phase to gradually acclimate the offender to a free community. If an inmate is unsuccessful during any phase of the aftercare program, she is returned to prison to complete the original sentence for the offense.

## Mary and Beth

Mary is a 34-year-old inmate in the IIP program. She will graduate from the boot camp in June and go to a halfway house, where she will be under electronic monitoring. Mary would ordinarily be serving a six-year sentence for possession with intent to deliver a controlled substance (heroin). This was her second conviction; she was in prison at the age of 23 for the same offense.

Mary said that the worst part of the program is intake (the first day of the program). "The DIs [drill instructors] really dog you out, especially if you have children," Mary said. On her first day she cried. "After awhile, I understood that the program was about accountability and tak-

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**"After awhile, I understood that the program was about accountability and taking responsibility for yourself and your actions." — Mary, an IIP inmate**

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ing responsibility for yourself and your actions," she said. "Until you learn to do that, you can't progress."

For Mary, the best thing about the boot camp is the chance for an early release. Even so, she said she was apprehensive about leaving this controlled environment. "Being a criminal is all I have ever known until now." She said that she wants to succeed but that returning to her neighborhood frightens her.

Beth is a 23-year-old inmate. She had been in the IIP program just two weeks, after being convicted of possession with intent to deliver a controlled substance (LSD). It was her first conviction. If not for the IIP program, she would be serving a six-year sentence. "I am a college graduate honor student," Beth said. "I have never been in trouble before. I had a good job and I never missed a day of work."

Beth agreed with Mary that the worst thing about boot camp is intake. She didn't seem to think that her first day was any less upsetting than Mary's; she cried too. Beth also said she didn't get enough time to eat. Inmates are allowed 15 minutes for meals. She said that she never thinks of quitting, but that she finds the boot camp very hard.

Beth, like Mary, felt that the best thing about the program is that she would serve a shorter sentence and have a chance to straighten out her life. "I did not realize that I was addicted to marijuana and alcohol before I entered the program. Now I can dry out and get another chance with my life."

Both women felt that, while the physical training was hard, as long as they kept trying, they were treated "ok." The maximum number of repetitions for any exercise is 15 and they felt that when they got in shape, they would be able to perform all of the required exercises. The 1.5 mile runs were also strenuous, but they felt that they performed just as well as the men.

Superintendent Suits said the all-female work group was highly sought after. At first, he said, he was concerned about the women's ability to do "grunt and groan" muscle work, but the women were successful. Once they had been to a site, they would be requested again. This could be due to the women taking more pride in their work and therefore doing a better job than the men, Suits said.

## Results

IDOC figures reflect that through 1997, 357 female inmates were admitted to the IIP. Of these, 219 have graduated from the boot camp and 115 did not complete the program. The remaining 23 females were still serving in the IIP. Of the initial 100 female graduates who had been released for at least two years, only 16 had returned to prison by the end of their second year in the community. Six returned because of technical violations, while the other 10 were returned because they had committed new offenses after release. These figures can be compared to the 9 percent technical violation rate and 16 percent new crime rate for the male graduates who had been released for at least two years.

The total three-year recidivism rate for both male and female IIP graduates for fiscal years 1991 through 1994 is 36 percent, as opposed to 37 percent for the comparison group of traditionally incarcerated offenders. Thirty-five percent of those in the comparison group were returned to prison for committing new offenses after release, and 2 percent were technical violators. Among IIP graduates, 26 percent were returned to prison for committing new offenses, and 10 percent were returned for technical violations. Suits is proud of the lower recidivism rate for new crimes committed by IIP graduates and feels that the greater likelihood that IIP graduates would return to prison due to technical violations could be attributed to the intensive supervision period not normally found in the comparison group.

The cost of incarcerating inmates in the boot camps is lower because offenders spend less time in prison. Instead of serving up to 3.5 years in prison, IIP inmates can complete their sentence in less than six months. Although additional stress may be placed on females in boot camps due to their fewer numbers and the intensive physical training, boot camps continue to be a viable alternative to the traditional incarceration of female offenders. ■

# Patterns in domestic violence by gender

By Nancy Smith

Detailed data on reported domestic violence incidents has recently become available in Illinois. Law enforcement agencies throughout the state submit this information on special forms to the Illinois State Police. It is hoped that this information will help develop a statistical picture of the nature and extent of domestic violence. In the future, as more information is gathered, trends may be deciphered as well. This article focuses on the distinctions between female and male offenders in these incidents.

Although men commit the majority of domestic violence offenses, women account for a substantial proportion of domestic incidents. In 1997, women were charged with 18,128 offenses, nearly 17 percent of the 107,603 domestic offenses reported in Illinois.

One-third of domestic offenses committed by women were against other women. By comparison, 91 percent of all domestic offenses committed by male offenders were directed toward female victims (Figure 1).

Female offenders and their victims tended to be slightly younger than their male counterparts. In 1997, 20 percent of female offenders were under the age of 20, compared to less than 13 percent of all male offenders. Similarly, 19 percent of all victims of female offenders were under the age of 18, while 12 percent of all victims of male offenders fell into that same age category.

Differences were also apparent in the victim-offender relationship with respect to the gender of abusers. While domestic offenses were most commonly committed between boyfriends and girlfriends, proportions varied considerably across genders.

Female offenders were less likely than males to commit domestic offenses against intimate partners. A little more than half of domestic offenses by women were against intimate partners, while three-fourths of offenses by men were against intimate partners (Figure 2).

Simple battery accounted for the largest proportion of all domestic offenses against intimate partners (35 percent), though proportions varied with respect to gender of the offender. While males were more likely than females to commit simple battery, a larger proportion of female offenders committed aggravated battery against their intimate partners than did males. Domestic battery accounted for 31 percent of all offenses committed by both male and female offenders.

Females were more likely than males to commit domestic offenses against family members other than intimate partners. Twenty-one percent of all domestic offenses by women were against their parents or children. Only 9 percent of offenses by men were against parents or children.

Domestic battery accounted for the largest proportion of offenses committed against parents and children by all offenders (35 percent), followed by simple battery (17 percent).

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Females were more likely than males to commit domestic offenses against children in general. Nearly 18 percent of all domestic incidents involving female offenders were crimes against children under the age of 17. Simple battery accounted for the largest proportion of offenses committed against children by female offenders, followed by domestic battery, child abuse, aggravated battery, and child endangerment. Conversely, male offenders committed less than 10 percent of all their domestic offenses against children, the majority of which were simple and domestic battery. Child abuse accounted for only 3 percent of all offenses committed against children by male offenders, while aggravated battery accounted for 6 percent, and child endangerment accounted for less than 1 percent.

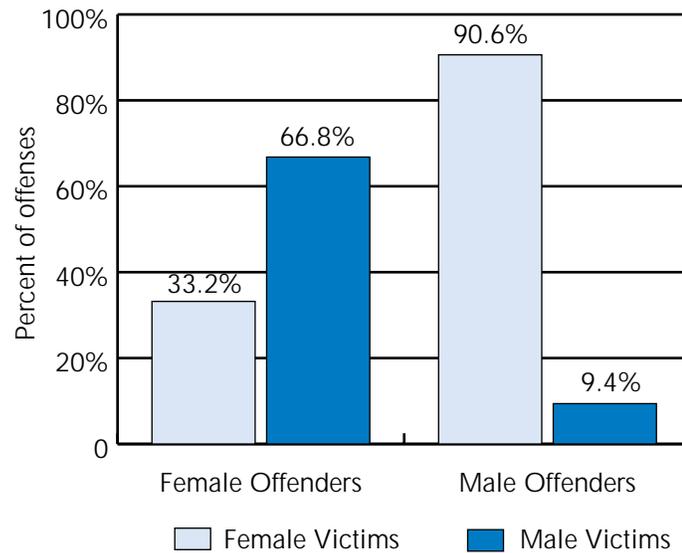
Aggravated battery accounted for the largest proportion of index offenses committed by both male and female offenders, though the proportions varied across gender. Nearly half of all index offenses committed by females were aggravated batteries, compared to one-third of all index offenses committed by male offenders.

Female offenders were slightly less likely than male offenders to use weapons during domestic incidents. When weapons were used, personal weapons — such as hands, fists and feet — were frequently the weapons of choice for both male and female offenders.

Much focus has been placed on women as victims of domestic offenses. But it is also important to consider women in the role of perpetrator. The traditional role of the woman as parent and/or caregiver has resulted in a greater likelihood of women victimizing family members who may appear more vulnerable, such as parents and children. This finding should also be examined and addressed.

While these figures offer a glimpse into the problem of domestic violence, it is important to remember that the data accounts for only a fraction of the number of domestic offenses that actually occur. Figures include only those offenses reported

Figure 1  
Gender differences



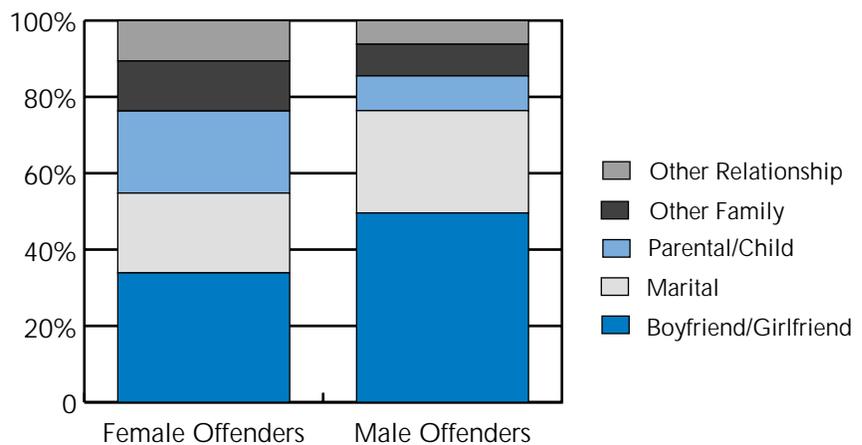
Source: Illinois State Police

to police and therefore provide a conservative picture of domestic incidents occurring in Illinois.

According to the Illinois State Police, nearly 128,000 domestic-related offenses were reported in Illinois during 1997. More than 92 percent of the 127,962 incidents reported during this period involved a single offense, of-

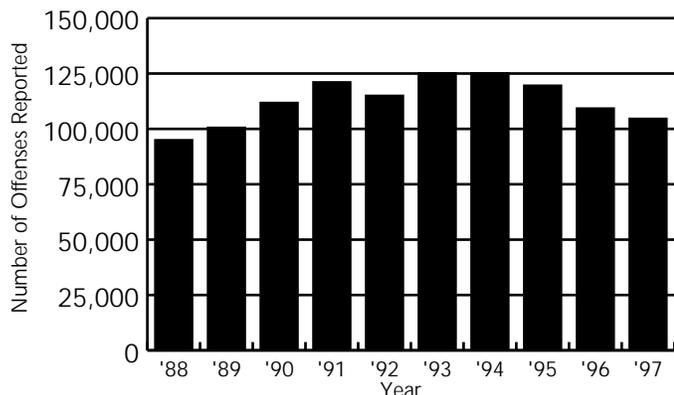
fender and victim, while the remaining 8 percent of the incidents involved multiple offenses, offenders or victims. This article provides a snapshot of domestic violence based on the 107,603 incidents that involved one offense, offender and victim. ■

Figure 2  
Victim to offender relationship differences



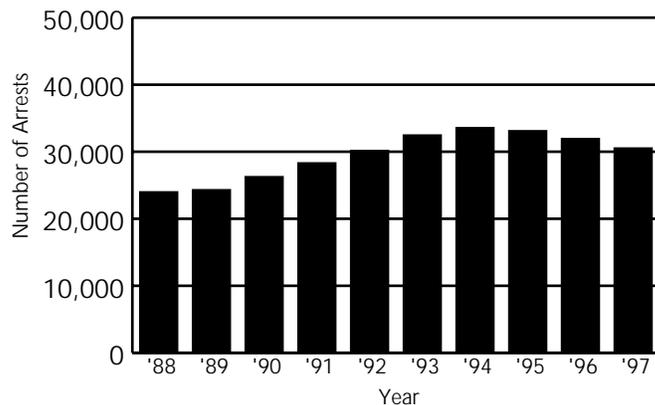
Source: Illinois State Police

Violent index offenses reported



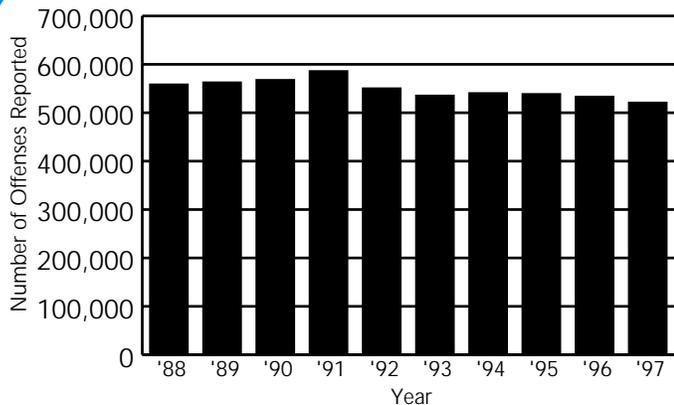
Source: Illinois State Police

Violent index arrests



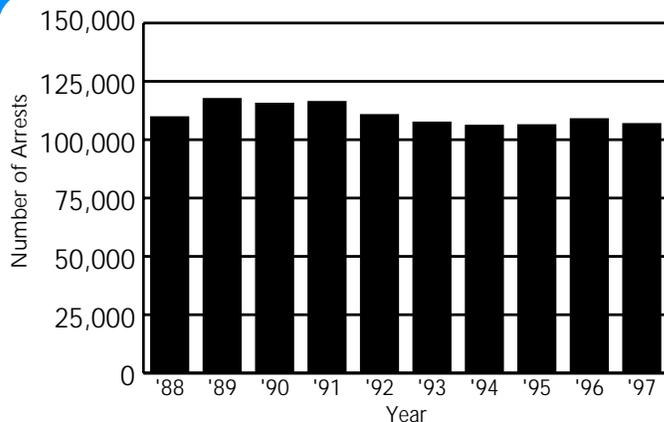
Source: Illinois State Police

Property index offenses reported



Source: Illinois State Police

Property index arrests



Source: Illinois State Police



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