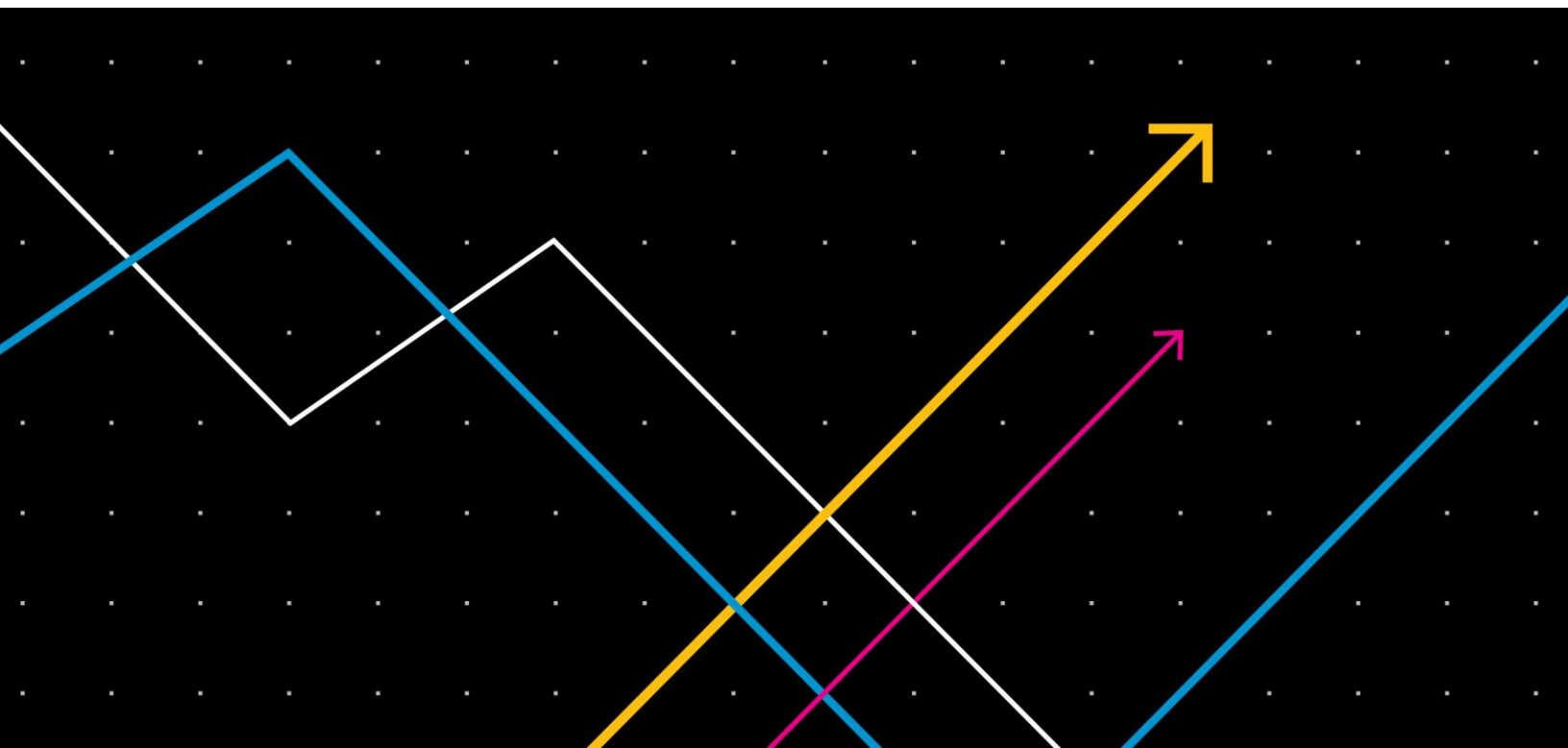


Appendix J:

Pilot Report



PILOT REPORT

National Survey of Correctional Contraband

Urban Institute and American Correctional Association (ACA)

Funded by National Institute of Justice (NIJ)

November 2017





ABOUT THE URBAN INSTITUTE

The nonprofit Urban Institute is dedicated to elevating the debate on social and economic policy. For nearly five decades, Urban scholars have conducted research and offered evidence-based solutions that improve lives and strengthen communities across a rapidly urbanizing world. Their objective research helps expand opportunities for all, reduce hardship among the most vulnerable, and strengthen the effectiveness of the public sector.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN CORRECTIONAL ASSOCIATION

The American Correctional Association provides a professional organization for all individuals and groups, both public and private that share a common goal of improving the justice system. ACA aims to shape the future of corrections through strong, progressive leadership that brings together various voices and forges coalitions and partnerships to promote the concepts embodied in its Declaration of Principles.

National Survey of Correctional Contraband Pilot Report

The National Survey of Correctional Contraband (NSCC) pilot was conducted by Urban Institute and ACA. A data manager was responsible for all data collection activities, including contacting potential participants, mailing surveys, receiving surveys, conducting debriefing, and collecting feedback.

Correctional administrators from 9 correctional facilities, including 6 prisons and 3 jails, were invited to participate in the pilot. A convenience sample was used based on recommendations from the American Correctional Association (ACA) and supporters of the research project. Participants were asked to complete and return the appropriate survey, and to participate in telephone debriefing conducted via email.

TABLE 1

Status of Survey

Correctional Facility	Type of Facility	Status
Trumbull, OH	Prison	Completed
Grafton, OH	Prison	Completed
Tucker Unit, AR	Prison	Completed
Maximum Security Unit, AR	Prison	Completed
Limon, CO	Prison	Completed
Attica, NY	Prison	Completed, but did not complete debriefing
Marion County Jail I	Jail	Completed
Marion County Jail II	Jail	Completed
Denver County	Jail	Completed

Average time to complete survey

On average, participants completing the survey (including time needed to prepare the data and fill out the survey questions) finished in 95 minutes, with a range of 30 to 210 minutes. Based on respondents' feedback, administration time for each facility is presented in Table 2. Two respondents in Arkansas did not provide a specific time for how long it took them to complete the survey; rather, they indicated that it was quick to fill out the survey, but took some time to retrieve the necessary data.

TABLE 2

Completion Time for Survey

Correctional Facility	Administration Time
Trumbull, OH	60 minutes
Grafton, OH	180 minutes
Tucker Unit, AR	Data retrieval can get time consuming, but completing the survey didn't take much time.
Maximum Security Unit, AR	Data retrieval can get time consuming, but completing the survey didn't take much time.
Limon, CO	210 minutes
Attica, NY	Debriefing not completed
Marion County Jail I	30 minutes
Marion County Jail II	30 minutes
Denver County Jail	60 minutes

Respondent feedback

When the completed survey was returned, the data manager contacted the participant via email for debriefing. The goal of the debriefing was to discuss:

- Whether the online survey software was easy to use
- The amount of time it took to complete the survey
- How difficult the questions were to answer
- Whether survey instructions were clear and easy to understand

Feedback from the Facility Survey participants indicated that nearly all nine found the online survey software was easy to use. One respondents, however, noted a difficulty in accessing the online survey due to restricted internet availability within correctional facilities. There were a few survey

items for which some facility respondents indicated it was difficult to obtain the requested information, either because the information is not collected or because retrieval may be time-intensive. As presented in Table 2, time taken to complete surveys varied by facility. Respondents explained that completion time depended largely on the ease of retrieving contraband related data. Finally, respondents agreed the survey instructions were clear and easy to understand.

In addition to their responses to our questions, some respondents provided additional specific feedback. One of the respondents emphasized the importance of offering a paper version of the survey because of the aforementioned internet access issue. NIJ and Urban were already planning on providing a paper option for the survey, but had initially fielded the pilot test with only an online version of the instrument. Once the respondent was provided with a paper version of the survey, they were able to quickly gather the answers to questions on paper, then scan and submit their responses via email once they were in a location with internet access.

A few respondents also indicated some confusion about the questions under section IV (Contraband Recoveries) of the survey. In particular, they noted that contraband recoveries might be recorded differently in their system than how they were asked to report these data in the survey. To address this feedback, the questions in this section were revised to give respondents more flexibility on how they reported these data. For example, respondents are now able to include any additional information to clarify how they record/report data on contraband recoveries. Further, respondents are invited to fill out the “total” number of recoveries in their facility and then indicate which types of contraband were included in this number. Finally, respondents are asked to report the number of contraband recoveries by certain types of items when data are available. In addition to these changes, the revised survey removed two duplicative questions from section IV and added an additional paragraph further explaining the survey’s definition of “contraband recovery.”

Another respondent suggested sending the survey well in advance of the submission date to give facilities ample time to coordinate with people from various divisions/departments within the facility to provide the answer (statistics/research, security, etc.). Finally, one respondent had trouble with the online system and was kicked out of the survey before they could complete it. The issue with the system was identified and will be fixed for the actual survey distribution.



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