

A Context for Considering Reentry Efforts for Cook County Jail Detainees & Releasees

Although reentry for incarcerated offenders has traditionally focused on those being released from prison, a growing body of research has recognized the needs of those released from the nation's jails and the potential positive impact that service provision and coordinated reentry can have on the recidivism of this population. As the Cook County Jail prepares for its application under the federal 2nd Chance Act, the following information needs to be considered regarding the characteristics and size of the jail's population.

- The Cook County Jail ranks 3rd largest in the United States in terms of the inmate population and admissions into the jail,¹ although Cook County has the largest *single site* jail facility in the country.
- Based on data from the national Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM) program, which performs urinalysis on anonymous samples of jail admissions across the country, 90 percent of arrestees admitted to the Cook County Jail were positive for an illegal drug, with over one-half positive for marijuana, about 40 percent positive for cocaine/crack, and roughly 20 percent positive for opiates. Chicago had the highest overall prevalence of positive drug tests across all the ADAM sites in the U.S., as well as for each of these individual drug types.²
- During 2008, there were 92,798 admissions to the Cook County Jail, with the majority of these admissions being accounted for by African-Americans (67 percent) and males (86 percent), with an average age of 33 years-old. Specific neighborhoods account for disproportionate numbers of the admissions to, and discharges from, the Cook County Jail (see attached map regarding zip codes of those released from the jail after having been convicted).
- During 2008, a total of 74,985 *individuals* were admitted to the Cook County Jail. Of these, 82 percent had 1 admission during 2008, 14 percent had 2 admissions during 2008, and 4 percent (3,150 individuals) had 3 or more admissions during 2008.
- During 2008, there were a total of 94,066 inmates *discharged* from the Cook County Jail. Of these, 35 percent were discharged as a result of posting bond and 50 percent were discharged as a result of being convicted/sentenced. Although sentences to prison (i.e., the Illinois Department of Corrections, IDOC) accounted for the majority of these inmates being discharged due to a conviction, 8 percent were discharged as a result of having served their sentence in the Cook County Jail and an additional 9 percent were discharged and placed on supervision (i.e., probation).
- Among those discharged and sentenced to IDOC, the average length of stay at the Cook County Jail was 140 days, compared to an average of 30 days for those sentenced to the jail.
- Although measuring return-to-jail is not the most precise indicator of recidivism, it is illustrative of the extent to which those released from the jail come back within a specific period of time. Based on preliminary analyses of data from the Cook County Jail, 44 percent of those inmates who were *convicted and served their sentence at the jail* in 2008 were returned to the jail within 1 year on another arrest/charge. Further, 53 percent of those inmates who were released because they were *convicted and sentenced to probation* in 2008 were returned to the jail within 1 year.

¹ Based on analyses by Cook County Sheriff's Office of data collected from the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics' 2006 National Jail Survey.

² Hunt, D.E. (2008): ADAM II Results for 2007. Justice Research and Statistics Association Presentation.