

### Issues/Challenges

- Attitudes of other staff people in the facility
  - Security staff – little respect for the library or books
    - Don't help retrieve library items when inmates are transferred
    - Books found damaged in cells during shakedowns are often disposed of without notifying the library
    - Officer attitudes towards books often determines how helpful they are to the library
    - Officers will tear covers off of books b/c they view them as a security threat
  - Need to improve relationship with security staff
  - Directors feel like the “enforcers”
- Security
  - How to limit theft of library items; non-returns that are passed from inmate-to-inmate
  - “Learn to lose a book” attitude; “if books are stolen it means you are buying the right stuff”
  - Concerns about theft rate of ILL books – want to keep up good relations with the public libraries
    - Acceptable loss rate?
- PR/Value of the Library
  - Need to demonstrate value of the library to superintendents
  - “top-down buy-in” to the value of the library needed to affect change in security officers
  - Need to foster more “team mentality” in the facility amongst staff
  - Value lies in:
    - Library provides education for inmates' transition back into society
    - Reading for Dads programs (inmate reads a children's book into a tape recorder which is sent home to his children)
- Population
  - Jails see daily turn over of inmates; P.C.: average stay last year was 2-weeks
  - Large populations of younger inmates (Jack) 50% of population ages 19-26
    - Younger inmates have very little respect for library items; see books as “disposable”
  - Diversity of foreign language speakers increasing
    - Different regions of Mexico, Central America and South America now represented (as compared to 5-10 years ago)
    - Increase in languages from the “Baltic countries” (ex: Albanian, Ukraine) (D.C. jail)
    - Increase overall in Russian, Chinese and Korean
      - Expensive to deal with (ex: \$2,000 to use a language telephone line for intake purposes, too expensive)
- Programming
  - Jails are planning to do more programs

- Initiative in the Putnam County jail to turn off the TV and provide educational programming (i.e. educational and health videos could be shown)
- Time management issue
  - Librarians in the prisons are assigned to the media review board which takes away time from library duties
  - Media review board allows for positive interaction with other staff and supervisors
  - Different levels of censorship at county and state level – much more controlled at the state level
- Collection
  - More interest in
    - “urban literature”
    - technical books – cars, racing cars
    - books for women in jails, not romances
  - Romances are not popular
- Administrative turnover
  - Supervisors are retiring at a rapid rate; not being replaced in a timely manner → organizational instability
  - Projected turnover of more than 50% of senior management in the coming years
  - Fear of losing organizational history with new managers; moving backwards
- Technology
  - Internet pilot program in prison system slow moving; jails do not foresee every having Internet access
  - DVD and CDs may soon be acceptable in prisons
- Space issue (D.C. jail): if they go online expects space for the collection to be reduced drastically

### System Services

- Collection Development
  - Learning other languages
  - VHS collection: African American issues; health; job seeking
    - If VHS is available inmates are allowed to run their own program without staff intervention
- Assistance in dealing with ESL inmates (not just Spanish speakers)
- Access to catalog (burned on CD or DVD)
- Programming
  - Trend towards less TV, more programming
  - Incentives to “PIMs”: reading to get out of lockdown
  - More educational programming on VHS
    - “Focus is behavior modification, want to keep them busy with positive activities”
    - creative writing and poetry presenters
- Funding for job/transition program (Helen)
  - To help inmates with writing resumes, locating work in their new communities
- Help with demonstrating the value of the library in the facility
  - Statistics / Impact

- Communication methods (i.e. facility newsletter contributed and produced by inmates)
  - Connecting library services back to “housing” is highly valuable
- Set up local contacts with public library staff for county jails (like Helen with Putnam)
- Site visits from MHLS staff to review library processes, collection; make suggestions for improvement