



# COST EFFECTIVE IN-SERVICE ALTERNATIVES FOR SMALL JAILS



Minnesota Jail Resource Center  
Presents

Cost Effective In-Service Training  
Delivery Alternatives:

How to Exceed Training Standards  
at a Low Cost

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## Alternative Delivery Strategies

"I increased training hours, increased effectiveness, and cut training costs by implementing alternatives to classroom-based training as part of my annual training plan."



# I. Theme: If it meets all the requirements of “Defendable Training,” it’s training!

There are a lot of misconceptions about training. Many people define training as only taking place in a classroom environment. While classroom-based delivery can be effective, it is only *one* means of training delivery. Given a particular learning need or operational problem, classroom-based delivery can sometimes be an ineffective way to meet the need. For example, can employees *really* learn how to search a cell or evacuate inmates from a housing unit by simply sitting through classroom instruction?

The key to understanding and using alternative training delivery strategies is first to *free your mind* of pre-conceived notions about training, and then make the assumption that *classroom delivery simply is not available* as an option. Once you do that, you will be surprised what you can develop and deliver as valid training!

## II. Executive Summary

This Training Resource Package recommends several cost-effective methods of providing valid in-service training for existing staff. Using these suggestions, the following level of defendable in-service training can easily be attained at a very low cost:

• In-Service Field Training Officer (FTO) Program	32 hours/employee/year
• Shift Overlap Training	12.5 hours/employee/year
• Experiential Drill Training	12 hours/employee/year
• Shift Scenario Training	24 hours/employee/year
• Independent Study Program	24 hours/employee/year
• Training at Staff Meetings	12 hours/employee/year
<i>Total On-The-Job Training</i>	<i>116.5 Hours/Employee/Year</i>

Other in-service training concepts:

• Correspondence Course	40 hours each course
• Ride-Along Training	8 hours each event
• 2 Classroom Sessions per year	16 hours
<i>Total Other In-Service</i>	<i>64 Hours/Employee/Year</i>

**Grand Total In-Service Training: 180.5 Hours Per Year**

If an agency implements just a few of the suggested methods for training discussed here, **40 hours of defensible in-service training** for each agency employee can be obtained very economically. Virtually all of this training can occur without pulling staff off the job or replacing them on shifts. It simply must be planned, delivered, and documented with as much precision and care as formal classroom instruction. If it meets the requirements of defensible training, it is training and should be included in the training plan each year. Use this document as a resource guide for the development of a wide variety of in-service training delivery.

### III. Introduction

The basic problem with training is that we usually associate it with a classroom setting. This is simply one form of training, and while it may not be the most effective, it is certainly the most expensive. **Training occurs any time a meaningful exchange of job-relevant information takes place:**

*“Training: A formal exchange of job-related knowledge and/or skills from someone having it to someone needing it where something is acquired and applied resulting in something of value for the agency.”*

If that exchange is properly planned, implemented, documented as training, it can be **defensible training**.

For defensible training, the following things must be clearly documented:

- **Objectives:** performance objectives (intent) and Lesson Plan or the functional equivalent (content).
- Statement of direct **relevancy to the job** (based upon problem analysis or performance analysis in the case of an existing employee or job task analysis for a new employee).
- Name of **Trainer** (with evidence of credentials, expertise, preparation, or proficiency).
- Name of **Trainee** (with specific job and/or post title).
- Duration of training—**Hours**. (How long did it actually take to learn? That can include actual time spent learning, processing/practicing, and being tested.)
- Effectiveness of Training: Individual **Assessment** of Trainee. (What the trainee learned? Was it applied? Did the agency see a benefit?)

*Nowhere in the above definition of training does it require that training take place in the classroom.* It does, however, require that learning be part of a **planned, formal, and well documented process**.

## IV. Needs

The training concepts suggested in this document will be cost-effective, but it will require some time and effort to develop them specifically for any given agency. Remember, it will still be formal training delivery but often in an informal setting. It simply will not be occurring in the classroom setting. The following items are needed to provide support for this kind of training delivery:

- The administrator should designate one person as the agency/facility training coordinator for purposes of planning and scheduling training.
- The agency training policy and procedure should recognize, define, and support training that is non-classroom based.
- The agency/facility training coordinator should receive some formal training as a trainer or training coordinator.
- It will take time to develop and produce this kind of training delivery. The agency/facility training coordinator will probably require some overtime and perhaps other incentives.
- This system of training delivery will require some new forms, record keeping, and careful documentation.
- This concept must be given strong and ongoing administrative support.

It is very important that on-the-job training or non-traditional delivery always be taken just as seriously and be conducted just as formally as classroom training. Since does not meet the pre-conceived stereotype of training, if anything it needs to be even more formal and organized than classroom.

The best place to start is to develop training policy and procedure that defines allowable training for the agency, and to specify all the different delivery methods that may be incorporated into the annual training plan. Then, in each year's annual training plan, a blend of delivery strategies can be included.

***A special warning about awarding training credit hours.*** Be careful when awarding training hours no matter what the delivery mechanism. Only credit the actual amount of time spent learning, processing, practicing, and being tested or evaluated, and don't confused payroll time with training time. This should hold for classroom delivery but be especially true for alternative delivery strategies. The quickest way to lose credibility with your administration and trainees, and put all your training activity under close scrutiny by outside entities (inspectors, auditors, or attorneys in case of litigation) is to appear to award inflated training hours. You never want to be in the position of explaining why you awarded 8 hours of training when the trainees spent one hour of that time at lunch!

## V. Training Delivery Opportunities

There are countless training delivery opportunities in a correctional setting. The following describes a few that can be implemented. The key is to assume classroom delivery simply won't be available.

Historically, in correctional training, the trainees all would come to where the training and trainers were. The important difference, and theme, for alternative delivery strategies is to concentrate on bringing the training to where the trainees are through capturing a series of pre-existing or created opportunities.

The following concepts are a few suggested training delivery opportunities.

### A. In-Service Field Training: “Tune-ups” for existing staff”

Schedule:	Once per quarter
Duration:	One shift/employee/quarter
Yield:	<u>32 hours/employee/year</u>

Using an FTO (Field Training Officer) model for on-the-job training is currently recognized as valid training for new employees. It is also very easy to convert an FTO program into a valid concept for formal training of existing employees.

**Think of in-service FTO training as a “tune-up” for existing employees.** For example, four times a year (once a quarter), place an existing employee in the FTO phase for a shift. Have your FTO supervisor or FTOs review critical elements of your job task list with the veteran trainees, and identify with the trainees certain mandatory or critical tasks and use the FTO teaching process to re-qualify them. Also, based upon employee appraisals or performance assessments, the FTOs and supervisors could identify certain tasks on an individualized basis as tune up topics specific for each trainee. One way to do this is to start with behavioral proficiency tests for these tasks. If staff can not meet the standard, then they are placed in FTO learning modules for those tasks.

To accomplish this, you will need:

- A good Job Task check-off list.
- Administrative and supervisory input concerning trainee's needs.

- Performance appraisals or employee performance assessments that are **task-based**.
- Ability to place FTOs on different shifts to reach all veteran staff.

The FTO program simply concentrates on building skills and enhancing abilities. It is competency based education. The trainee either can or cannot do something properly. The evaluation comes when the FTO formally signs off that the trainee properly demonstrated a given task. All the time that the trainee practices for the skill demonstration counts as training.

Placing existing employees in the in-service FTO Training phase should yield a total of **32 hours** of valid documented training per employee per year. The cost will be in training the FTOs in the use of the FTO teaching process for veteran employees, and the ability to place an FTO on various shifts as required.

## **B. Shift Overlap Training Delivery Sessions: “Capture the Moments”**

Schedule:	Once a week
Duration:	15 minutes each session
Yield:	<u>12.5 hours/employee/year</u>

The concept of **roll call training** is well established in law enforcement, but rarely used effectively in corrections—especially small agencies. In most jurisdictions, there is a 15-to-30-minute overlap period between shifts. Sometimes, employees even arrive early on their own to review previous shift activities, special watches, etc. The shift-overlap period is an excellent time to provide employees with training. This 15-minute block is an excellent time to present topics of short duration. A longer topic, for example a 4-6 hour lesson plan, could be broken down into 15-minute mini-segments and be delivered through a series of overlap sessions. One agency calls these training moments “*Trainer’s Shorts*” and posts the upcoming topics on bulletin boards.

For example, once a week, schedule a Shift Overlap Training module. Topics can come from the policy and procedure manual, operational problems that have been occurring in the agency, or information from publications concerning standards, litigation, or, as suggested above, a formal longer lesson plan broken out into 15-20 minute bites.

Warning: This should never deteriorate into a “*here read this and sign that you understand it*” process. That is not training, though it could be an administrative activity, and should not be part of an agency training plan.



Shift Overlap Training concentrates on building knowledge or comprehension rather than skills and abilities. It is a valid exchange of relevant information on a recurring basis. In this form of training, it is important to plan the sessions covering, and then documenting, the 6 essential elements of defensible training. The training coordinator will need to document:

- The performance objectives,
- Job-relevancy of the topic,
- The trainer,
- The trainees,
- The duration, and
- Assessment of trainee comprehension.

This kind of training is probably already going on very informally during your shift changes. Once a week, several days in a row, or following a routine schedule, formalize it with written objectives and materials backed by a lesson plan designed with 15 minute delivery bursts.

Using Shift Overlap Training once a week for 15 minutes yields a total of **12.5 hours** of valid in-service training per employee per year. The cost will be the time it takes for the administrator or training coordinator to prepare a written handout and complete a documentation form, and cover shift roll calls or overlap periods.

### **C. Experiential Training: “Practice Drills as Training - Relevant Learning by Doing”**

Schedule: Once a month  
Duration: One Hour  
Yield: 12 hours/employee/year

Certain critical topics can be covered in a classroom or through reading and thinking about them, but the proof of the pudding is, quite simply, in **practicing the activity on-site under realistic conditions**. As staff practice, they begin to learn how to deal with unexpected events in a correctional environment. That learning activity is training if it is formally planned, conducted, and documented following the 6 elements of defensible training. The idea is for staff to practice such that they perform more normally in an abnormal (emergency) situation. Since there is no such thing as a “normal” emergency, there should also be no such thing as a “normal” drill. Each drill should have difference objectives and problems that staff encounter and need to solve. That’s where relevant learning will occur.

The following critical incidents are suggested as a few appropriate topics:

### **Top Priority**

- Fire Drills
- Suicide Intervention Drills (Hanging, Overdose, Self-Mutilation)
- Medical Emergency Drills
- Lock Failure/Power Failure Drills
- Terrorist Threat/Attack

### **Priority**

- Escape Drills
- Hostage Drills
- Bomb Threat Drills
- Natural Disaster (Tornado, etc. appropriate to the region) Drills
- Mass Arrest Drills
- Inmate Disturbance Drills

Once a month, set up some form of critical incident/event drill for each shift. During the week before the drill, have staff review the appropriate policy and procedure, protocol, processes (which can count as training as well if formally planned, delivered, and documented.) and then conduct the drills.

Vary the topics. Fire and suicide, as the greatest risks in institutions, should be scheduled for drills at least once a quarter. Good judgment should prevail, but perhaps staff should not always be warned before each drill, and only be informed that one is due sometime in the near future concerning a given topic. When possible, move actual minimum and medium security inmates (using volunteers or staff for maximum inmates) during fire drills. Use volunteers or other staff as victim/inmates for all inmate-sensitive drills such as suicide, hostage, etc. Present your staff with some realistic situations - for example, a set of emergency keys is missing, one key staff member is gone out of the building, a lock is jammed, etc. Develop a written drill scenario describing the situation, problem to be solved, and the performance objectives, and then observe and evaluate participant behavioral performance during the drills.

It is very important to hold “post mortem” debriefings to critique behavior, develop more acceptable procedures during emergencies, and confirm the learning. It is also important to practice all procedures and to time the drills with a stopwatch. For example, if it takes more than **three minutes** to evacuate inmates from a housing unit to an area of refuge, you have potentially big problems. The answer: **Practice, practice, practice.** The extra benefit: It’s all

training if it's formally planned, implemented, and documented. To accomplish this, you will need:

- Written performance objectives for each drill
- Written scenario for each drill
- Develop and use a form documenting the drill scenario, objectives, staff involved, evaluation of staff performance, stopwatch times for performance, duration of learning experience, and changes recommended in procedures and behavior.
- It is a good idea to periodically have a fire marshal, medical professional, mental health professional, etc., as appropriate, monitor some of your drills. These subject experts should also sign off on your drill scenarios (and can suggest future robust scenarios).
- Conduct and document formal de-briefing/evaluation sessions with staff after drills.

The experiential learning drills concentrate on **skills** and **response building**. There does need to be a basis in knowledge concerning policy and procedure, but this can easily be accomplished before drills in the shift-overlap sessions or shift scenario training. The actual learning is tested in performance. Vary the “test” so that staff must solve some unanticipated problems within a seemingly routine drill - that's when true learning and skill development occur. It is important to use a written scenario as a basis for the drill, and to use a stopwatch to add pressure to perform properly but promptly. Staff must recognize these drills as training and take them very seriously. If drills are currently being conducted, take advantage of this training opportunity by planning them as training events.

Schedule at least one critical incident practice drill every month for each shift. Emphasize fire and suicide as the most probable events in a correctional facility. The duration of the learning experience of each drill will probably exceed one hour. This kind of critical and relevant experiential training can easily yield an estimated **12 hours** per year per employee.

#### **D. Shift Scenario Reviews: “Think, Understand, and Learn While Working a Shift”**

Schedule:	Twice a month
Duration:	One hour per event
Yield:	<u>24 hours/employee/year</u>

Staff can learn while working on a shift. Working individually or in teams, they can seek out knowledge and skills that are confirmed at the end of the shift by the training coordinator.

The process would include handing out information sheets, hypothetical situation summaries, incident fact sheets, or other job-relevant information, i.e., scenarios, at the start of a shift, and asking the staff on duty to read and discuss the information or situations during the course of the shift. These fact sheets or scenarios must be backed by written performance objectives as part of a lesson plan using the shift scenario delivery strategy. Some form of evaluation or testing for comprehension needs to occur at the end of the shift. For example, a written report on how the shift agrees or recommends to handle a given situation or even a series of questions testing for judgment and decision making around the issue contained. In this delivery strategy, persons working together on the shift will be conducting a small group activity while they work by discussing the information with each other during spare moments, reporting out at the end of the shift, and will in essence be training themselves concerning the given issue.

One example of Shift Scenario Training would be to hand out a fact sheet concerning an offender's escape from custody in another (anonymous) agency, the excessive use of force on an offender, or any number of scenarios from correctional case law or actual or potential operational problems. Next, hand out a copy of your agency's relevant policy and procedure, make standards and statutes available, and give the shift an assignment sheet with containing some guiding questions and instructions. Scenarios can be developed based on actual problems occurring in other agencies. Additional good sources of topics are any of the publications that report litigation results or case law. The subjects are limitless.

Twice a month, declare a Shift Scenario Training day. Prepare for this with written performance objectives, a good documenting form, and handouts for the trainee/shift workers. Develop a comprehensive lesson plan for Shift Scenario Training showing each topic or individual scenario as a module of the overall plan. You will need to prepare:

- An overall lesson plan concerning Shift Scenario Training including, for example, 24 planned modules based on agency need or prevention.
- Performance objectives for each individual module.
- Handouts for each shift (fact sheets, scenarios, agency policy and procedure, instructions and guiding questions, etc.).
- Questions that staff must answer *in writing*, or written or oral reports required to assess trainee comprehension, judgment, and decision making.

Shift Scenario Training is appropriate as a training method to increase **knowledge, comprehension, judgment, and decision-making** of a wide variety of topics in the agency. It is not designed for physical skills building or increasing psychomotor abilities; that is more appropriately done through the FTO program and the experiential drills. The training coordinator should always provide appropriate follow-up in response to trainee written answers or reports from the scenario questions. Once the answers are evaluated, further

training- either knowledge-based or experiential/behavioral - may be indicated. Develop and use a good documenting form that covers all six items required for defensible training.

Using Shift Scenario Training twice a month, assuming the actual learning duration is about one hour per shift, yields 2 hours per month of valid training. This means a total yield per employee of **24 hours** per year of documented in-service training.

## **E. Staff Independent Studies Programs: “Let Them Train Themselves”**

Schedule: Once a month (or as needed)  
Duration: 2 hours  
Yield: 24 hours/employee/year

This delivery method works well with “self-starting” staff. It is also good to use this with potential supervisors. If the administrator needs to know something, or has a problem to solve, assign someone on staff to research the topic and make recommendations. That, in fact, becomes training as they educate themselves as they find answers. This might involve calling other agencies, calling the National Institute of Corrections (NIC), going to the library, contacting vendors, going on-line, etc. in order to discover what your agency should do.

For example, if one staff member is responsible for designing fire drills, that person will readily educate him/herself by obtaining information from the local or state fire marshal, National Fire Protection Association, American Corrections Association, state departments of corrections, NIC, etc. Perhaps you want to know how to upgrade your program of special diets. Assign a staff member an independent study project to identify the state of the art and make recommendations. The subjects are countless and directly job-relevant: just ask the administration what issues or questions need attention and answers.

The training coordinator will need to take special care in writing performance objectives for each Independent Study Module. The duration of learning will vary based upon the actual time required to research a topic. The real benefit is that someone on your staff will become the expert on that topic and can then make a training presentation at the next staff meeting, giving your organization even more training hours.

Once a month, assign an independent study topic to one or two staff members with a deadline to respond with a written report. Not all staff can get involved, and not all staff members have the interest or motivation to research information, equipment, or processes. The key is



not to “dream up” topics but to request information is really needed to set policy, assess and solve problems, or improve the organization. If you give these staff a written assignment, chances are you have already defined the performance objectives in that memo. Always use the written assignment as the device to begin the training documentation. Save their written response as part of the evaluation of what they learned.

The beauty of a well designed independent study assignment is that the staff member not only trains him/herself, but also provides both the administrator and the organization with useful information of direct value.

Use of an Independent Study Program with selected employees once a month should yield at minimum 2 hours of training experience (and probably considerably more). This means a potential for **24 hours** of in-service training available for staff.

## **F. Training Presentations During Staff Meetings: “Catch Them While They’re Together”**

Schedule:	Once a month
Duration:	One hour per staff meeting devoted to training
Yield:	<u>12 hours/year/employee</u>

If you are not holding regular staff meetings, you probably should. This is an excellent time to make sure that problems are solved and shifts run consistently. It is also a good time to present new material to your staff and to make sure they comprehend it. Be careful using this one: a meeting is usually just a meeting. Not all parts of a staff meeting can count as training, but a meeting can clearly shift from agency business to knowledge and skills development activities that are covered by performance objectives or a lesson plan, and where some form of trainee evaluation is documented.

In most instances, the administrator or certain staff members who have researched topics or developed expertise in general custody or administrative topics are appropriate trainers. Staff meetings are also an excellent time to bring in outside experts, such as the fire marshal, health inspector, equipment provider, etc. to make brief presentations about various topics. When asking for outsiders to present, the training coordinator may need to develop the performance objectives and record the content of the training. Since you will only be asking someone for about **one hour’s presentation**, you may get an expert free of charge. If you had asked for a formal 8-hour training session, that same expert may want charge. By asking in small amounts, you may get a great deal of free expert training.

Schedule one staff meeting every month. If you hold regular 2-hour staff meetings, scheduling one hour of that time as the training component would be reasonable. Either assign

staff to develop the one-hour training component for that meeting (as an Independent Study Project), or identify the topic yourself. Make sure that written performance objectives are developed before the staff meeting and that someone is assigned to take good “content” notes during the training. This event can also be video taped for future use as a training module as well as for documentation purposes. Develop a quick and easy way to test staff comprehension of these staff meeting training topics.

Generally, these sessions will be used to increase staff’s knowledge or awareness. They can also be used to change staff attitudes in a formal setting. These sessions are basically mini-classroom sessions but are much cheaper to produce, and they are of such short duration that there is usually no problem with staff losing concentration or lack of attention.

It is recommended that you schedule one staff meeting each month. A portion of that meeting should be scheduled as the staff training component. One training hour per month out of the meeting would yield **12 hours** per year per employee of valid in-service training.

## **G. Other In-service Training Methods: “Catch what you can that’s already available”**

Use of any of the available **Correspondence Courses** such as from the American Correctional Association and National Sheriffs Association. These will usually yield at least 40 hours of formal training at a very low cost for staff new to a position, and they can also be used as refresher training for veteran staff.

**“Ride-Alongs”** with other community, county, or state experts such as the Fire Marshal, Health Inspector, Building Inspector, etc. Ask if one of your staff could accompany these persons as they conduct inspections in occupancies similar to a 24 hour correctional operation (like nursing homes and hospitals, etc.). Have the Fire Marshal, etc., write you a letter documenting what the trainee has learned. If your staff spends four hours with these experts learning codes, inspections, and techniques, that is four hours of valid employee training if it can be related to the correctional environment concerning Fire Safety, Sanitation, Hygiene, Food Service, etc.

**Videos** are a good training source as long as the content is relevant and the information is not counter to the agency policy, procedure, and practice. Clearly the content must be directly job-related, and trainees must be evaluated. Simply watching a video is not training: it is only the input of information. It needs to be linked to performance objectives, processing (i.e., group discussion assignments) to assure comprehension, and then assessment to measure learning. A wide variety of videos are available of varying quality and utility, and of necessity they tend to be generic.

**E-Learning** is becoming more readily available even for smaller agencies. If a computer is available with internet access, a wide variety of job-related modules are available although many are on a subscription-basis only. NIC has on-line e-learning at no fee.

**Satellite Downlink** training (video conference, distance learning, and formal class-room modules) is also available, usually on a subscription basis. Generally downlink equipment is available at local educational facilities, and some providers, such as NIC, do not charge for receiving the actual training program signals.

Form a **training consortium** with a nearby agency or region. Share training resources and programs. While you have been busy developing some on-the-job components, a nearby agency may have stressed a different approach. Get together regularly and discuss training methods and training needs. Then, keep in touch and share!

And, as a one delivery strategy among many, continue to provide **classroom training** sessions.

## VI. Summary

This training resource package has suggested several cost-effective delivery methods of providing valid in-service training for staff. Using these strategies, the following volume of defendable in-service training for a given employee can be attained at a very low cost:

• In-Service FTO Program:	32 hours/employee/year
• Shift Overlap Training:	12.5 hours/employee/year
• Experiential Drill Training:	12 hours/employee/year
• Shift Scenario Training:	24 hours/employee/year
• Independent Study Program:	24 hours/employee/year
• Training Presentation at Staff Meetings	12 hours/employee/year
<b>TOTAL ON-THE-JOB TRAINING:</b>	<b>116.5 Hours/Employee/Year</b>

Other in-service training concepts:

• Correspondence Course	40 hours each course
• Ride-Along Training	8 hours each event
• 2 Classroom Sessions/Yr.	16 hours
<b>TOTAL "OTHER" IN-SERVICE</b>	<b>64 Hours/Employee/Year</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL IN-SERVICE TRAINING:</b>	<b>180.5 Hours Per Year!</b>

If a jurisdiction follows these training approaches for in-service training, most hourly requirements for training will be greatly exceeded at a very low cost. If just half of the suggestions are implemented, or if the frequency of events is reduced by half, each employee could potentially receive approximately 90 hours of in-service training with most of it on-the-job.

Even if your agency reduced the frequency of events further such as Experiential Training Drills once a quarter (12 hours), Staff Meetings once a quarter (4 hours), Shift Overlap Training over a two week period once a quarter (10 hours), and Shift Scenario Training every other month (6 hours), combined with the use of independent studies, correspondence courses, video tapes, and a few formal classroom sessions, the agency can easily meet the ACA standard of 40 hours of in-service training for custody employees at a low cost.

**Remember, this is where you want to be a year from now:**

*“I increased training hours, increased effectiveness, solved operational problems, and cut training costs by implementing alternative delivery to classroom-based training as part of my annual training plan.”*