

Regional jails are multijurisdictional corrections facilities in which two or more jurisdictions share in both the initial capital construction and ongoing operating costs. Representatives of the jurisdictions jointly organize, administer, operate, and finance the facilities through an annual budget.

NIC Information Center staff conducted a telephone survey to identify regional jails nationally that meet this definition. Jails surveyed included those with “regional” in their names, as listed in the American Jail Association’s publication, ***Who’s Who in Jail Management***, 1991 edition. Fifteen jails currently meet the definition of “regional jail”:

- Miller County/Bi-State Justice Center, Texarkana, Arkansas
- Big Sandy Regional Detention Center, Paintsville, Kentucky
- Northeast Regional Correctional Center, Saginaw, Michigan
- Northwest Regional Correctional Center, Crookston, Minnesota
- Bertie-Martin Regional Jail, Windsor, North Carolina
- Ramsey County-Lake Regional Law Enforcement Center, Devils Lake, North Dakota
- Southwest Multi-County Correctional Center, Dickinson, North Dakota
- Correctional Center of Northwest Ohio, Stryker, Ohio
- Orangeburg/Calhoun Regional Detention Center, Orangeburg, South Carolina
- Bowie County/Bi-State Justice Center, Texarkana, Texas
- Clarke/Frederick/Winchester Regional Adult Detention Center, Winchester, Virginia
- Mid Peninsula Regional Security Center, Saluda, Virginia
- Piedmont Regional Jail, Farmville, Virginia
- Prince William-Manassas Regional Adult Detention Center, Manassas, Virginia
- Chelan County Regional Jail, Wenatchee, Washington



Regional Jail Organization

According to a 1979 study funded by the National Institute of Corrections, regional consolidated jails may be categorized into seven different organizational arrangements:

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Type I | A consortium of jurisdictions which agree to operate a regional facility for both pretrial and sentenced inmates, with shared control by a jail board drawn from the participating bodies, as well as joint pro rata funding. In this arrangement, there are no other jail facilities in the participating jurisdiction. |
| Type II | The same arrangement as Type I except that some jurisdictions in the consortium also maintain their own local facilities for pretrial inmates. |
| Type III | A multijurisdictional facility exclusively for certain sentenced offenders; participating jurisdictions also continue to operate their own jails for both pretrial and sentenced inmates. |
| Type IV | A multijurisdictional facility holding both pretrial and sentenced inmates; some jurisdictions in the consortium continue to operate their own jails. |
| Type V | A locally operated facility which accepts referrals from other participating jurisdictions and the state, generally for work release; all jurisdictions are charged a fee-for-service for all persons confined in the regional unit. |
| Type VI | A single jurisdiction accepts pretrial and/or sentenced inmates on a set fee-for-service basis, with total control remaining with the operating jurisdiction. |
| Type VII | Consolidated city-county jurisdiction. |

Implementation Issues

The chief obstacles to successful implementation of a true multijurisdictional jail are political rather than technical. Barriers can include:

- Absence of legal authority to permit the sharing of resources across jurisdictional lines.
- “Turf issues,” the loss of authority and control by sheriffs and county governing bodies.
- Differences in management philosophy.
- Perceived inequities in proportionate sharing of costs.
- Lack of cooperation from judicial authorities.
- Increased transportation costs in geographically remote rural areas.
- Disagreement over the location of the jail.

The regional jail concept has to be sold in terms of its workability. The key is the formation of a cohesive planning group that includes the sheriffs, chiefs of police, judges, prosecutors, county commissioners, corrections planners, and mayors and/or city managers from the participating jurisdictions. Elements that contribute to success include the following:

- Reflecting the planning group's management philosophy in the facility design.
- Reviewing prior court orders from each participating jurisdiction.
- Evaluating current staffing and potential staffing needs.
- Evaluating the criminal justice system and use of community alternatives to incarceration for their impact on jail capacities.
- Exploring innovative funding alternatives for construction and operation.
- Creating a public awareness of the current jail problem in each jurisdiction to help build community support
- Planning for a regional transportation system.
- Developing a standardized record keeping system that can be used by all of the participating jurisdictions through a computer network.
- Developing a formula for the proportionate sharing of costs based on the percentage of beds each jurisdiction is projected to use.
- Establishing an implementation strategy and timetable.

Advantages

Advantages of multijurisdictional jails include:

- Counties with limited resources have access to modern facilities.
- Expanded services and specialized care are available for prisoners.
- Staff are professionals, and advanced management practices are used.
- Multijurisdictional jails generally have greater access to community resources.
- Multijurisdictional jails offer more sophisticated classification options.

References

Bounds, Bruce. "Considering the Multijurisdictional Jail Option." Colorado ***Sheriff 6(3)***, Summer 1985, pp. 12-15.

Murray, Donald. "How to Link County Corrections." ***County News*** 15(21), November 14, 1983, pagination unknown.

Paquette, Paul. "The Nuts and Bolts of Implementing the Regional Jail Concept," ***American Jails***, Fall 1987, pp. 42-45.

Price, Barbara Raffel and Charles L. **Newman**, ***Multijurisdictional and State Jails: A Study in Organization and Management***. Pennsylvania State University, February 1979. Study conducted with the support of the U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections.