



How we rapidly reduced a jail's population during a jail and criminal justice system study

PROJECT COMPLETED: July 2007

LOCATION: Okaloosa County, Florida

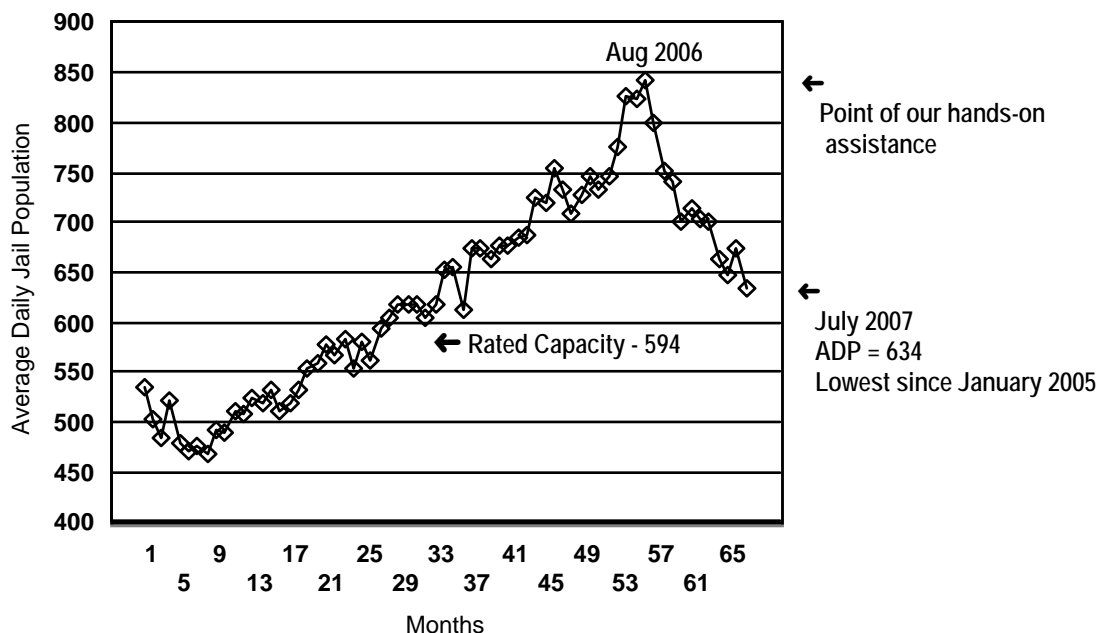
DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTY'S PROBLEM

The Okaloosa County Jail had exceeded its rated capacity of 594 beds to the point that the Director of Corrections was in the process of obtaining bids to convert the jail's parking lot into a tent-based holding facility complete with razor-ribbon (barbed wire) and guard dogs.

THE INTERVENTION

We took an active role in reducing the jail population, in addition to writing a report. We analyzed the criminal justice system, examined cases and worked with Judges, State's Attorney, Public Defender, and Pretrial Release staff to improve the speed of case processing and to increase the number inmates who could be safely released by various means. We began this "hands on" assistance in late July 2006. As can be seen in Figure 1, the jail population peaked in August and began to rapidly decline. At the time of the final presentation of the report in August 2007, the average daily population (ADP) had dropped to 634, the lowest since January 2005.

Figure 1. Results of JCI Assistance in Reducing the Average Daily Jail Population in Okaloosa County, Florida



Further reduction in the jail population is anticipated. Our report contained 39 recommendations, several of which were implemented before the study was concluded. Many of the remaining recommendations can be implemented immediately without incurring costs.

ABOUT THE PROJECT TEAM

JCI performed most of the on-site work with members of the criminal justice system. The National Center for State Courts interviewed judges. The activities of reducing the jail population in July and August of 2006 were performed by JCI staff.

REFERENCE

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