

Book Smarts and Street Cred: Being a Correctional Librarian in Virginia

VLA Professional Associates Forum
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- Prison, jail, penitentiary, correctional center, slammer, joint, can, big house, behind bars, up the river, clink . . .
- Prisoner, inmate, convict, offender, con, jailbird, lifer, trusty . . .

What's in a name?

- **What is the difference between jails and prisons?**

Jails are locally operated short-term facilities that hold inmates awaiting trial or sentencing or both, and inmates sentenced to a term of less than one year, typically misdemeanants. Prisons are longer-term facilities run by the state or the federal government that typically holds felons and persons with sentences of more than one year. Definitions may vary by state.

- <https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=qa&iid=322>

Jail vs. Prison

- Since the 1800's, Virginia has opened many more correctional facilities. Today, the Department of Corrections, which oversees the operation of the Commonwealth's adult correctional facilities, operates approximately 50 institutions statewide. During this past quarter century the Department has grown from a modest agency of 5,300 inmates, and 4,100 employees, to an agency of around 31,000 inmates, and nearly 13,000 employees. 2004 marked the 30th anniversary of the creation of the Virginia Department of Corrections.
- <https://vadoc.virginia.gov/about/history.shtm>

Virginia Department of Corrections

- As of April 2017:
 - 29,972 offenders in DOC facilities – average daily population
 - 64,699 in Community Corrections (probation and parole)
- Female population in facilities:
 - Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women: 1,190
 - Virginia Correctional Center for Women: 448
 - Three work centers/units: 472
 - Females comprise about 7% of the DOC population in Virginia

Virginia Department of Corrections

- State facilities:
 - Correctional Centers
 - State Prisons
 - Work Centers
 - Field Units
- “Major” facilities:
 - Thirty-eight total
 - Three for females
- Currently 27 facilities have librarians

Who do we serve?



A day in the life . . .

- American Correctional Association
 - “. . . Access to comprehensive library services that include, but are not limited to, a reference collection containing general and special materials, and planned and continuous acquisition of materials to meet the needs of . . . offenders.”
 - Library services are available daily, including evenings and weekends
 - Offenders in restrictive housing and protective custody shall have access to library services

Library Services

- Offenders as library assistants
- Qualified staff person who coordinates and supervises library services
- There should be available to the facility a person with a master of library sciencewho assists with coordinating and supervising library services and is responsible for training of all library staff

Library Staffing

- All library materials must comply with the *Specific Criteria for Publication Disapproval* section of Operating Procedure 803.2, Incoming Publications.

Banned Books