

**GAO**

United States General Accounting Office

Report to the Chairman, Subcommittee  
on Intellectual Property and Judicial  
Administration, Committee on the  
Judiciary, House of Representatives

April 1993

# **PRISON BOOT CAMPS**

**Short-Term Prison  
Costs Reduced, but  
Long-Term Impact  
Uncertain**



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United States  
General Accounting Office  
Washington, D.C. 20548

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**General Government Division**

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April 29, 1993

The Honorable William J. Hughes  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Intellectual Property  
and Judicial Administration  
Committee on the Judiciary  
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Hughes:

In response to your request, this report describes state and federal boot camp programs and includes data on their costs and impact on prison crowding and recidivism. The report makes no recommendations.

We are also sending copies of this report to the Attorney General, the Director of the Bureau of Prisons, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and other interested parties. We will also make copies available to others upon request.

Major contributors are listed in appendix IX. If you have any questions, please contact me on (202) 566-0026.

Sincerely yours,

Harold A. Valentine  
Associate Director, Administration  
of Justice Issues

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# Executive Summary

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## Purpose

Between 1980 and 1991, prison populations grew about 150 percent, reaching a total of 823,414 inmates. To handle this growth, corrections systems increased their capacities and looked for less costly alternatives to traditional forms of incarceration. One such alternative is the prison boot camp. Using military-style, basic training techniques within a corrections setting, the boot camps attempt, in general, to steer a young, nonviolent offender away from a life of crime before he or she commits a more serious offense.

In 1988, GAO reported that it was too early to tell whether the seven prison boot camps then in operation were succeeding. In 1991, the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Intellectual Property and Judicial Administration, House Judiciary Committee, asked GAO to update its earlier work and specifically to determine (1) which corrections systems employed boot camps; (2) whether the camps were effective in reducing corrections system costs, overall prison crowding, and inmate recidivism; and (3) what potential the boot camp concept held for the federal prison system.

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## Background

The first modern prison boot camps began in 1983 and 1984. Since then, prison boot camps have achieved popularity among state prison systems seeking ways to handle spiraling inmate populations and reduce corrections system costs, prison crowding, and recidivism—or the rate at which former inmates return to prison. While there have been some important modifications over the years, prison boot camps continue to follow a basic model. The camps generally target young, nonviolent first-time offenders who have not yet committed major felonies, subjecting them to a term of “shock incarceration” where they are put through a regimen similar to military basic training. Such shock incarceration facilities are commonly referred to as boot camps. Boot camp programs generally consist of some combination of precision drills, physical exercise, hard physical labor, close discipline, substance abuse treatment (if needed), counseling, and education.

Although the physical regimen of the camp is strenuous, the camp offers the participant the incentive of a short incarceration period—usually 6 months or less—rather than a period of years. For corrections officials, the potential benefits of boot camps include reducing (1) the overall costs of building and operating prisons, (2) crowding in facilities that already are operating at or above capacity, and (3) recidivism among the participants.

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In 1990, Congress enacted legislation authorizing a boot camp program for the federal prison system, and the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) created its Intensive Confinement Program—the federal boot camp program. The federal program is small, with one camp for men and one for women. This federal program differs from the state programs in that it does not release participants directly from the camps. Instead, participants work their way first through the boot camp, then through a halfway house, and finally through home confinement before they are released.

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## Results in Brief

Prison boot camps have continued to increase in popularity, with 26 states now operating a total of 57 camps with a capacity for 8,880 inmates. While continuing to follow the traditional military model, many states have expanded their programs in size and adapted them to the particular needs of their individual inmate populations.

Whether boot camps eventually will reduce costs, recidivism, and crowding remains to be determined. Most programs are still relatively new, and few formal evaluations have been made. The early indications are that the camps reduce overall corrections costs and systemwide prison crowding because inmates are released earlier, not because the camps are less costly per inmate than other forms of imprisonment. Recidivism data are limited, but the early data show only marginal improvements over traditional forms of incarceration.

As presently structured, the federal boot camp program, created in 1990, is too small to have any appreciable effect on reducing overall costs, prison crowding, and recidivism in the federal prison system. In July 1992, approximately 1,400 (about 2 percent) of the total inmate population met the statutory and BOP eligibility requirements for participation. BOP does not release participants immediately after they graduate from the boot camp. Although this reduces the program's potential short-term cost savings, it does offer BOP the opportunity to build on the skills participants develop in the camps. With only 77 participants having completed all three stages of the program, it is too early to assess the federal program's impact on recidivism.

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## GAO's Analysis

When GAO issued its first report on the subject in 1988, only seven states had boot camp programs, and most of these were still in the developmental stages. Twenty-six states now have programs, with a capacity for 8,880 inmates in 57 camps. Fourteen states have camps for

women as well as men. The programs vary widely in size. For example, Georgia and New York together have a capacity for 4,273 inmates—almost half of the total of the 26 states combined. Nine states, on the other hand, have capacities of 100 inmates or less. (See ch. 2 and app. III.)

While continuing to follow the basic military model used in establishing the programs, the states have adapted the programs to fit their own needs. Eligibility standards still focus on young, first-time offenders, but the standards vary considerably by the offender's age, length and type of sentence, and criminal history. Moreover, there are variations in who selects the participants and at what stage of sentencing, how long the programs will run, what types of activities will be featured, and what form of supervision, if any, will be required upon the participants' release. The programs feature discipline and emphasize building the participants' self-esteem. (See ch. 2.)

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### Boot Camps May Reduce Costs and Crowding but Not Recidivism

State boot camp programs are popular because they offer an alternative to traditional forms of incarceration. The boot camps are seen as successful in rehabilitating participants, treating substance abuse, and improving the participants' self-image. The long-range effectiveness of the camps is uncertain, however, because most programs are too new and few meaningful evaluations have been performed.

The major selling point for boot camps to date has been that the programs are less costly than those for traditional prisons. However, these lower costs are not the result of lower daily operating costs per inmate but rather the reduced time the inmates are incarcerated. Prison crowding is reduced for this same reason, assuming that (1) the boot camp participants would have otherwise been placed in prison rather than on probation and (2) the camps do not result in higher recidivism in the long term. (See ch. 3.)

There is no clear indication that boot camps have measurably reduced recidivism. Part of the problem is that, by definition, recidivism must be measured over time, and most boot camps are still relatively new. In addition, identifying comparison groups with identical characteristics is difficult. Nevertheless, the programs that have attempted to measure recidivism have shown that boot camp graduates have only marginally lower recidivism rates than similar inmates in traditional prisons. In addition, any differences in the rates tend to diminish over time. (See ch. 3.)

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## The Federal Program Is Fully Operational but Has Minimal Impact

The federal boot camp program is now operational. BOP opened a camp for men at Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, in December 1990 and a camp for women at Bryan, Texas, in July 1992. Overall, the two camps have a capacity for 312 inmates—less than 0.5 percent of the federal inmate population. The federal program differs greatly from those of the states, since inmates are not released early. BOP instead offers camp graduates the incentive of completing their sentences first at halfway houses and subsequently in home confinement.

The federal boot camp program actually has two categories of eligible participants. Under the 1990 statute creating the Intensive Confinement Program, inmates with initial sentences of no more than 30 months may volunteer for the program. Because not enough inmates met the statutory requirements to fill the camps, BOP under its own authorities established a supplemental eligibility standard that allowed certain inmate volunteers already in BOP facilities to participate. Such inmates must have original sentences of 60 months or less, no more than 24 months of their sentences left to serve, and met all other requirements for participation, such as those for health and age.

Although this supplemental standard gave BOP enough inmates to fill the camps, it created two categories of boot camp participants who entered the program under different legal authorities. Participants who qualify under the 1990 statute are eligible for early releases and extended home confinement after their graduation from boot camp, but those who qualify under BOP's supplemental standard are not. However, BOP has a policy of not releasing any participant immediately after he or she graduates from the boot camp. (See ch. 4.)

It is too soon to measure results—particularly recidivism—in the federal program, since only 77 male participants and no women had completed all three stages of the program as of December 1992. Because the program is small and BOP does not release inmates early, the program is not likely to have any major impact on short-term federal prison costs and crowding.

There are several proposals to expand the federal boot camp program. Any discussion of program expansion would need to consider the expansion's impact on the sentencing policies embodied in the federal sentencing guidelines and statutes mandating tougher sentences for certain nonviolent drug and white-collar offenders.

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**Recommendations**

GAO is making no recommendations in this report.

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**Agency Comments**

In its oral comments, BOP said it found the chapter on federal boot camps to be a fair, balanced discussion of the federal program. But while BOP agrees that the 1990 act creating the federal program may be interpreted as providing BOP the authority to release boot camp participants immediately after their graduation from the camp, BOP asked GAO to specifically note that BOP has no official position on this issue and plans to continue its policy of releasing no inmate before the end of his or her sentence. GAO agreed to do so. (See ch. 4.)





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**Abbreviations**

BJA	Bureau of Justice Assistance
BOP	Bureau of Prisons
FORT	Female Offender Regimented Treatment
ICC	Intensive Confinement Center
NIJ	National Institute of Justice
PDC	Probation Detention Center
RID	Regimented Inmate Discipline
SAI	Special Alternative Incarceration
SI	Shock Incarceration

# Introduction

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Since 1983, the prison boot camp has become a popular alternative for prison systems seeking ways to reduce prison costs, prison crowding, and inmate recidivism. By combining a correctional setting with techniques more commonly associated with military basic training, the boot camp is seen as a way to rehabilitate young, nonviolent first-time offenders before they commit major crimes and without subjecting them to long terms in traditional prisons.

In 1988, we reported that it was too early to determine the effectiveness of boot camps within the seven states that then had programs. Since that time, boot camps have become even more popular, and 26 states and the federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) currently have programs. This report updates our earlier work and examines the effectiveness of current programs in reducing prison costs, prison crowding, and inmate recidivism.

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## Increasing Prison Populations

Prison populations throughout the United States are increasing rapidly, continuing a trend that began in the mid-1970s. By the end of 1991, state and federal prison populations totaled 823,414 inmates, an increase of almost 150 percent since 1980. Growth is expected to continue for the near future.

The reasons for the larger prison populations are many and varied. Partly, the growth is due to general population increases. In addition, there has been aggressive prosecution of the "war on drugs," an increase in the number of offenses within certain crime categories, and greater public support for punitive correctional approaches.

The inmate population increases have strained corrections systems nationwide. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the state systems reported in 1991 that their inmate populations exceeded their reported capacities by at least 16 percent.

In response to the increasing inmate populations, the state and federal prison systems have increased the construction of new facilities. More prison space is seen as only a partial solution, however, and corrections systems have continued to explore other avenues, such as alternatives to traditional forms of incarceration. One such alternative is the prison boot camp.

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## Prison Boot Camps

The prison boot camp, a form of shock incarceration, is a relatively recent phenomenon that attempts to combine elements of military basic training and traditional corrections philosophy. Although the individual programs vary widely in form and objectives, the typical boot camp is targeted at young, nonviolent first-time offenders. Once in the camp, the participant is subjected to a regimen of (1) military drills and discipline, (2) physical exercise, (3) hard physical labor, (4) specialized education and training, and (5) counseling and treatment for substance abuse and addiction.

Most boot camp programs require the inmates to volunteer, offering as an incentive an incarceration period of a few months, compared to the much longer periods they would spend in prison or on probation. Generally, a state boot camp graduate is released to parole, intensive supervision, home confinement, or some type of community corrections.<sup>1</sup>

The philosophy behind the prison boot camps is a simple one. Offenders who can be turned around before they commit a major crime can improve their own opportunities for living a successful life free of incarceration. Traditional prisons generally have not been viewed to be successful in rehabilitating offenders.

According to a National Institute of Justice (NIJ) official, the population at greatest risk of entering prison is the young adult who is poorly educated, comes from a low-income background, has not had proper role models or discipline, has little or no work skills, and is subjected to an environment where drug use and trafficking are common. Because many misdirected young persons have become productive citizens after exposure to military training, the boot camp endeavors to provide this same discipline and direction to persons who still have a chance of being diverted from a life of crime and incarceration.

The boot camp concept appeals to diverse elements of the criminal justice system. For the offender, it offers a second chance. He or she generally will be returned to the community in a much shorter period without the stigma of having been in prison. For the judge, it is a sentencing option that provides sanctions more restrictive than probation but less restrictive than a conventional prison. For the correctional system, it allows the placement of individuals outside the traditional prison environment and reduces costs and crowding by moving persons through the system in less time.

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<sup>1</sup>In home confinement, an offender is confined to his or her home except for specific pre-approved periods during the day, such as a doctor's appointment or for a job.

The boot camp concept also appeals to groups with diverse views on the objectives of corrections. For those who believe that corrections should focus more on rehabilitation, the shorter sentence, structured environment, supervision after release, and emphasis on training and treatment can be found in the boot camp. For those who believe prison should serve as punishment and a deterrent, the highly disciplined environment, military-style drills, physical exercise, and work within a correctional setting exist in the boot camp.

Many of the features of the prison boot camp are not new, having been used in part by various jurisdictions over the years. However, the first modern prison boot camps began in Georgia and Oklahoma in 1983 and 1984. The concept spread quickly, and by 1987, seven states had programs. Today, 26 states, the federal prison system administered by BOP, and even some local jurisdictions have camps.

In 1988, we reported on the status of boot camps at the request of Senator Lloyd Bentsen. In that report, we noted that boot camp popularity was expanding, although the camps had not been in operation long enough to tell whether they would be effective in reducing overall prison costs or inmate recidivism.<sup>2</sup>

The Crime Control Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-647, 104 Stat. 4789) authorized BOP to begin a shock incarceration, or boot camp, program that would incorporate many of the features of the state boot camps. BOP opened a camp for men in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, in December 1990 and a camp for women in Bryan, Texas, in July 1992. Although they differ in many respects from the state programs, these camps incorporate the military-style approach that characterizes the modern prison boot camp.

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## **Objectives, Scope, and Methodology**

The Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Intellectual Property and Judicial Administration requested that we update our September 1988 report on prison boot camps now that more time had passed and so many other states had started programs. He asked us to determine (1) what programs are in place and how they are structured; (2) whether the programs have been effective in reducing corrections systems costs, prison crowding, and inmate recidivism; and (3) what plans and possibilities the boot camp concept held for the federal system. For the purposes of our work, we further defined these objectives as follows:

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<sup>2</sup>Prison Boot Camps: Too Early to Measure Effectiveness (GAO/GGD-88-125BR, Sept. 9, 1988).

- **Current programs.** What state correctional systems now have boot camp programs in place? How do these programs compare to each other and to the federal program in such areas as costs, persons served, length of program, program design, and follow-up services?
- **Program effectiveness.** Have the boot camps been effective in reducing (1) the overall costs of corrections; (2) recidivism, or the rate at which former inmates return to prison; and (3) the incidence of crowding in correctional facilities? How is such effectiveness measured? Have the states performed evaluations that consider all the necessary factors and appropriate comparison groups?
- **Applicability of boot camps within the federal system.** How has the boot camp concept been adapted to the federal system? What are BOP's long-range plans for the concept? Are these plans consistent with the experience of the state systems, with the nature of the federal prison population, and with other priorities within the federal criminal justice system? What are these plans likely to achieve?

To answer the questions relating to current programs, we analyzed the studies on boot camps to date and contacted each state correctional system to determine which had programs. We identified 26 states that either had a combined 57 programs in place or were likely to begin operations during the period of our review. Appendix I provides a key contact for each of the programs we identified and serves as a resource for those who desire more information on specific programs.

We developed and sent detailed questionnaires to the states with programs, asking for information related to program organization and design, eligibility, statistics, costs, and results. We used two different questionnaires, as explained in more detail in appendix II. The first questionnaire concerned overall program administration and results, while the second dealt with activities in individual camps. In total, we received responses from each of the 26 states with programs and from 53 of the 57 camps surveyed.

To supplement the questionnaires, we requested and obtained the published results of any evaluations that had been conducted on boot camp programs as well as other key documents describing program activities in the 26 states. We did not verify the information provided, although we did conduct follow-up telephone interviews to clarify inconsistencies in the data provided.

To answer the questions relating to program effectiveness, we analyzed published evaluations by the states and NIJ. In addition, we visited Georgia, New York, and Oklahoma—three states that were among the older and/or larger programs. In these states, we obtained and analyzed program statistics and held discussions with program and criminal justice officials in an attempt to determine whether the boot camps had led to any reductions in recidivism, costs, and crowding. Where possible, we analyzed the data used in the program evaluations, although we did not attempt a complete verification of such data. We met with program officials as well as judges, probation and parole personnel, and former inmates to obtain their views on the programs.

To answer the questions on the applicability of boot camps within the federal system, we visited the federal camps in Lewisburg and Bryan and obtained program data from BOP headquarters in Washington, D.C. We did not verify the statistics provided by BOP, although we did obtain the source documents where available. We reviewed the applicable law, the program regulations, and camp guidelines; analyzed cost data; obtained statistics on the inmates who had been through the program; and discussed plans for the future. We also visited two halfway houses in Washington, D.C., where we discussed the federal program with former inmates and halfway house personnel.

We also met with representatives from NIJ, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)—the three Department of Justice agencies other than BOP involved in boot camp activities. From these agencies, we obtained materials such as surveys, evaluations, journal articles, and grant awards.

We did our work between September 1991 and November 1992 and in accordance with generally accepted governmental auditing standards. We discussed the report with BOP officials, and their comments are in chapter 4.



# Variations of the Basic Prison Boot Camp Model Have Been Adopted in Twenty-Six States

Prison boot camps have continued to increase in popularity since our last report in 1988. Twenty-six states now have programs, and 14 of these have camps for women as well as men. Overall, 57 camps with a total capacity of 8,880 inmates were in operation at the time of our review. With some variations, the camps operated on the military-style model, offering a combination of work, discipline, drills, training, and treatment to young, nonviolent offenders who had committed relatively minor offenses and had no substantial criminal history.

Because no national database exists on state boot camps, we developed a profile of state camps using a combination of questionnaires to program and camp administrators, site visits to three states, and a review of the most recent program evaluations available. We found that within the basic model, the programs differed in size, objectives, and approach, tailored to the individual state's needs and correctional philosophies.

## Twenty-Six States Have Boot Camp Programs

The prison boot camp concept has spread since the first modern camps opened in Georgia in 1983 and Oklahoma in 1984. By 1988, when we issued our first report on boot camps, seven states had programs. Each succeeding year, other states added new programs, and as of June 1992, when the Pennsylvania camp began operations, 26 states had boot camp programs.

At the time of our survey, some states were adding programs, and others were expanding their program by opening more camps, increasing their capacities, and beginning programs for women. The 26 states had opened a total of 57 camps. Fourteen states had programs for women as well as men.

The programs varied widely by size, with an overall capacity of 8,880 inmates. New York and Georgia, the two largest programs by far, were equipped to handle 4,273 inmates. At the other extreme, 9 of the 26 states had a capacity for no more than 100 inmates each. Appendix III provides general information on each state program.

The responses to our questionnaires indicated that more growth may take place in the future. For example, 14 of the 26 states with programs said they already planned or were considering expansion over the next 2 years through such mechanisms as adding new facilities, expanding existing facilities, increasing the percentage of inmates selected for participation, and broadening eligibility requirements.

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Generally, the states began their camps under specific statutory authority, although some were authorized to do so under existing laws or administrative procedures as well. Twenty-one states reported a specific statute authorizing a boot camp, and 5 said their camps were authorized under other, more general statutes. Two states said they began their camps in response to an executive decision, and four said they did so under their state agencies' general authorities. Appendix IV identifies the types of legal authority for each state's program.

Depending on the program, the prison boot camp may serve as an alternative for individuals who otherwise would be in prison, in jail, on probation, or on parole. Georgia, for example, has both a probation-alternative program and a prison-alternative program. Among the 26 states surveyed, 22 reported that their programs supplemented their prisons, 2 said they supplemented their jails, 9 said they supplemented probation, and 3 said they supplemented parole. The individual responses are shown in appendix V.

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**Program Eligibility**

Prison boot camps are aimed at redirecting an individual before he or she embarks on a career in crime. Thus, most programs target young, first-time offenders who have not committed major crimes or exhibited a tendency toward violence. Given the emphasis on physical exertion, participants generally must be in relatively good health, and most programs require that they volunteer. Appendix VI summarizes the general eligibility requirements for each of the 26 states.

Typically, inmates are selected for boot camp participation before or at the time they first enter the correctional system. Only three states reported that they took inmates who had served time in prison. The actual selection process varies by state and may involve more than one placement authority. For example, 20 states reported that the sentencing judge could sentence a person directly to a boot camp. Twenty states also said that the correctional agency could make this decision when the inmate enters the system. Only four states said that the decision could be made by probation or parole authorities.

The state programs tend to be aimed at young offenders, even though some may permit participation by older inmates. Seventeen of the 26 programs were targeted at individuals aged 30 or younger, and 11 of the 17 were targeted at inmates aged 25 or younger.

Similarly, the states typically restrict eligibility to inmates who committed relatively minor felonies and are not subject to long sentences. For example, 13 of the 26 states denied participation to individuals facing original sentences of more than 8 years. In addition, many of the states denied eligibility to individuals who had committed previous adult offenses, violent crimes, or sex crimes.

Because of the rigorous programs, inmates also generally are screened for suitability. Nineteen states said they would not take inmates with physical impairments, and 21 states said they would not take inmates with mental impairments. Nineteen of the states require inmates to volunteer for boot camp participation, while 17 allow inmates to withdraw voluntarily.

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## **Program Emphasis**

Generally, boot camp programs are of relatively short duration, compared to the sentences the participants otherwise would have to serve. The programs typically offer some combination of drills, physical exercise, work, training, treatment, and education. Within these broad parameters, however, there are wide variations among and sometimes even within the individual programs.

The short period of incarceration is an important part of the boot camp philosophy, as it offers an incentive to the individual who wishes to get out of the correctional system as soon as possible and without the stigma of having spent years in prison. As shown in appendixes III and VI, the sentence is almost always shorter if the time was spent in a boot camp rather than a traditional prison. The length of time spent in the boot camps ranges from a low of 30 days to a high of 240 days. Most programs were in the 90- to 120-day range. After successfully completing the camp, the participant usually is allowed to return home, even though he or she may be subject to conditions of parole or supervision.

Despite the shorter period of incarceration, a hallmark of the boot camp is its intensity. Most boot camp programs base their physical training on exercises used by the military, with an emphasis on precision drills and calisthenics. Often the participants are subjected to hard physical labor, such as clearing land, constructing walks and retaining walls, and providing facility maintenance. Activities typically are conducted within groups—such as classes, platoons, or teams—to emphasize teamwork.

Also as in military basic training, the participants tend to be subjected to a very disciplined lifestyle. They live in spartan surroundings, are

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responsible for keeping themselves and their bunks neat and clean, and have reduced contact with the outside world. The participants may be subjected to summary discipline—such as having to do push-ups immediately upon being caught in minor infractions—and may even be subjected to intimidation by drill-sergeant-type instructors.

Another hallmark of the typical boot camp is its emphasis on providing the participants with skills and assistance that will help them adapt to the outside world upon release. For example, most programs offer some type of academic training as well as health care and treatment. Training tends to focus on basic skills, as many inmates have literacy problems. Treatment is often aimed at substance abusers, who represent a primary target group for the boot camps. Personal and group counseling may also be available.

Despite these similarities, each program is unique and has its own mix of the various components. Table 2.1 shows the emphasis states said they placed on the various components of their programs.

**Table 2.1: Emphasis of Boot Camp Programs as Reported by States**

Component	Number of states reporting emphasis as				
	Very Great extent	Great extent	Moderate extent	Some extent	Little or no extent
Drills	12	10	4	<sup>a</sup>	<sup>a</sup>
Exercise/fitness	14	10	1	1	<sup>a</sup>
Vocational training	<sup>a</sup>	3	2	4	17
Academic instruction	7	8	6	2	3
Work	13	9	3	1	<sup>a</sup>
Health care/treatment	6	13	4	3	<sup>a</sup>
Summary discipline	10	12	3	1	<sup>a</sup>
Spartan environment	9	8	6	<sup>a</sup>	3
Reduced visitation and contacts	5	10	5	4	2
Intimidation	2	2	7	7	8

<sup>a</sup>No response in this category.

Source: GAO administrative questionnaires.

The boot camp generally is seen as only part of the answer in seeking to redirect the participants' lives. Correctional officials said that no matter how good the program or the intentions of the participants, they often

return to the same areas and lifestyles that were such a poor influence on them in the first place. Thus, the temptation to return to old habits is great.

Most programs include various types of follow-up to reinforce the values learned in the camps. Only one state reported that graduates are given unconditional releases. Six states reported that boot camp graduates are released to general parole, and 17 reported that graduates are released to special supervision. Seven states reported that graduates may go to another corrections facility, and eight said that graduates are subject to other types of supervision.

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## Program Objectives

Prison boot camps have a broad appeal, within both the corrections community and the general population, because (1) they tend to reinforce views on the objectives of incarceration held by diverse groups and (2) they represent a change from traditional approaches. At one level, the camps are seen as an ideal punishment and deterrent, since the participants have little free time, are subject to a rigorous schedule and discipline, and usually engage in hard physical labor. On another level, boot camps are seen as an excellent vehicle for rehabilitation, given the restricted target groups and the emphasis on redirecting the individual through education, training, treatment, counseling, and enhancing self-esteem. Overall, boot camps are seen as having the potential to reduce systemwide prison crowding, the recidivism of their participants, and the costs of operating corrections systems.

We queried the administrators of the individual camps to determine what they saw as the primary objectives of their camps. We directed these questions to the camp level because (1) some states have more than one type of camp and (2) we wanted the views of those actually charged with carrying out the day-by-day activities of the camps. We received responses from 53 of 57 camps.

Camp administrators were asked to gauge the importance of 16 different objectives—using 5 degrees of importance ranging from “little or no importance” to “very great importance.” These 16 objectives included such traditional goals of corrections as punishment, rehabilitation, protecting the public, and deterring crime or criminals. However, they also included objectives that corrections officials give as reasons for creating prison boot camps, such as offering an alternative to traditional incarceration; improving self-esteem; providing education and training; and reducing

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costs, recidivism, and crowding. The responses, showing the importance placed on each of the 16 objectives, are in table 2.2.

**Table 2.2: Objectives of State Prison Boot Camps as Seen by Boot Camp Administrators**

Objective	Importance of objective				
	Very great	Great	Moderate	Some	Little or no
Need for alternative to traditional incarceration	43	9	1	<sup>a</sup>	<sup>a</sup>
Improving self-esteem	31	22	<sup>a</sup>	<sup>a</sup>	<sup>a</sup>
Drug treatment and education	32	13	7	1	<sup>a</sup>
Reducing costs	29	17	6	1	<sup>a</sup>
Rehabilitation	21	27	4	<sup>a</sup>	1
Reducing crowding	28	15	5	3	2
Reducing recidivism	18	28	5	1	1
Protecting public	20	24	4	5	<sup>a</sup>
Discipline/labor	18	5	18	1	1
Education	14	26	6	5	2
Deterring crime	7	12	23	5	6
Deterring specific offenders	9	9	22	6	7
Addressing public dissatisfaction	6	10	28	2	7
Addressing court pressures	2	8	24	4	15
Punishment	1	10	11	23	8
Vocational training	5	8	2	23	15

<sup>a</sup>No response in this category.

Source: GAO boot camp questionnaires.

Camp administrators saw the need for an alternative to traditional incarceration as the highest ranking objective, followed closely by improving self-esteem, providing drug treatment and education, and attempting rehabilitation. Also high on the list were the objectives of reducing costs, crowding, and recidivism. Conversely, among the lowest ranking objectives were providing vocational training, punishment, and addressing court pressures.

The three states we visited—Georgia, Oklahoma, and New York—provided examples of the evolution and diversity of today’s prison boot camp programs. All three have expanded their programs and now have multiple camps. Georgia and Oklahoma have the two oldest programs, which have changed from the programs that opened in 1983 and 1984. New York and

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Georgia are by far the two largest programs. Although the three programs share many common elements—such as the drills, the work, the treatment—they have major differences in objectives, organization, and approach. Appendix VII summarizes the programs in the three states at the time of our visits.

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# Early Results Indicate State Boot Camps Reduce Short-Term Prison Costs and Crowding but Not Necessarily Recidivism or Long-Term Costs

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Although the states generally were pleased with their prison boot camp programs, their long-term effectiveness remains largely unknown. The programs are still fairly new, and few states have made formal evaluations of their programs. The evaluations that have been made do not always provide meaningful comparisons between boot camp participants and other prison inmates.

The major selling points for boot camps to date have been that they save money and reduce prison crowding. However, the reason for the reduced costs and crowding is that the boot camp programs are shorter in duration than traditional sentences, and thus participants are released earlier. The camps do not appear to have had a major effect on recidivism in those few cases in which evaluations have been attempted.

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## Few States Have Performed Formal Evaluations

One factor hindering the analysis of boot camp success is the shortage of formal evaluations. Only five states—Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, New York, and Oklahoma—reported that their prison boot camp programs had been formally evaluated at the time of our work. We obtained the evaluations on each to determine the extent to which they measured the effectiveness of the programs in reducing costs, recidivism, and crowding. Although we found these to be the most reliable data available on the subjects, the evaluations varied considerably in their methodologies, recency, and presentation and consequently were of limited use in determining overall effectiveness.

The most extensive evaluation process was done in New York, which publishes an annual report on its boot camp program. Some of the advantages of its most recent evaluation are (1) New York has processed more boot camp inmates than any program in the country, providing the largest base for evaluation; (2) the program is among the oldest in the country and has not changed significantly since it began in 1987; and (3) the evaluation utilized comparison groups and provided measurements of both cost savings and recidivism. At the time of our review, New York had produced four such annual evaluations; the most recent report was issued in January 1992.

Georgia's most recent evaluation report was issued in January 1991, and like New York's, it provided both cost and recidivism data. Unlike New York's, it did not use control groups but rather compared boot camp inmates with other classes of inmates that shared some of the same characteristics. In addition, Georgia's program was in a period of change



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at the time its evaluation was made. The evaluation showed results based on a program that until 1991 had been limited to probationers. Thus, the current multicomponent program—with several different types of boot camps—has not been evaluated.

Florida's evaluation was issued in a "twenty-five month review" in April 1990. The report discussed "recommitment," or recidivism rates of boot camp participants and similar inmates (i.e., nonviolent, first-time offenders) throughout the Florida system who had been released from custody between December 1987 and October 1989. The report also estimated overall savings to the state of sending offenders to the boot camp rather than to prison.

Louisiana's evaluation was conducted by NLJ. The evaluation report was issued in August 1990 and attempted to measure the impact of the program on costs, recidivism, and crowding. The analysis included the use of comparison groups and inmates in the program from February 1987 to February 1988.

Oklahoma conducted a limited internal evaluation of recidivism within its boot camp program in September 1986. Although it compared boot camp participants with other similar inmate populations, the evaluation's use was limited for several reasons. First, the program was less than 2 years old when the evaluation was issued. Second, the evaluation itself was, at the time of our review, about 6 years old.

Oklahoma is part of a broader ongoing NLJ/BJA multisite study of boot camp programs in eight states. The other states are Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, New York, South Carolina, and Texas. The NLJ/BJA study is divided into three parts: (1) a descriptive analysis of the programs; (2) an analysis of inmate attitude changes, using comparison groups; and (3) an analysis of recidivism, also using comparison groups. The first two parts should have been completed by late 1992, and the recidivism analysis should be completed by early 1993. At the time of our work, NLJ and BJA were still involved in their analysis and could not yet comment on their findings.

NLJ also has produced other studies of boot camp programs, although these did not amount to formal evaluations of program success. A June 1989 report entitled Shock Incarceration: An Overview of Existing Programs was the first attempt at developing a national perspective of boot camp programs. Since the issuance of this report, NLJ also has produced periodic

national surveys of boot camp programs throughout the nation; the most recent was conducted in 1991.

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## **State Officials Believe Boot Camps Have Been Successful**

In our questionnaires to the states, we asked program administrators whether they believed their prison boot camp programs had been successful. We asked them to rank the success of their programs in 14 different categories, with the rankings in five degrees ranging from "very great extent" to "little or no extent." Recognizing the limited experience in many programs, we also gave the ranking "no basis" as an option. The responses are summarized by category in appendix VIII.

In general, the states believed their programs had been successful in meeting program objectives. For example, 25 of the 26 states believed that the programs had succeeded in improving inmate self-esteem to a great or very great extent, while the remaining state's program was so new there was no basis for a determination. Similarly, 23 states believed the objective of providing an alternative to traditional forms of incarceration had been met to a great or very great extent.

The majority of states also believed the boot camps had succeeded to a great or very great extent in providing drug treatment and education, rehabilitation, protecting the public, and addressing public dissatisfaction with traditional forms of incarceration. While no categories ranked high under "some extent" or "little to no extent," at least a fourth of the states said they had no basis for determining the success in addressing court pressures, deterring crime in general, deterring specific offenders, or providing vocational training.

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## **Reduced Correctional Costs and Prison Crowding Are the Result of Shorter Sentences but Not Necessarily Less Recidivism**

Officials from the 26 states had mixed opinions on whether the boot camp programs were meeting the overall system objectives of reducing correctional system costs, prison crowding, and inmate recidivism. As shown in table 3.1, most states believed their programs were effective in these areas but to varying degrees.

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**Table 3.1: State Opinions on Whether  
 Their Prison Boot Camp Programs  
 Have Reduced Costs, Recidivism, and  
 Crowding**

Objective	Extent to which objectives have been met					
	Very great	Great	Moderate	Some	Little or no	No basis
Reducing costs	7	9	4	2	1	3
Reducing recidivism	5	7	8	1	*	5
Reducing crowding	4	7	2	8	2	3

\*No response in this category.

Source: GAO administrative questionnaires.

Reducing costs was seen as the greatest success with 16 of the states responding that this objective had been met to a great or very great extent, while only 3 said it had been met to some or little or no extent.

Respondents saw reducing crowding and recidivism as somewhat less successful, ranking in the 2 highest categories for 11 and 12 of the states, respectively. Nine states said recidivism had been reduced to a moderate or some extent, while 10 states gave these same rankings for reductions in crowding.

To expand on the state administrators' views, we looked for objective data on boot camp effectiveness in reducing costs, recidivism, and crowding. We found that the limited number of formal evaluations, the differences in the programs, and the limited amount of time some programs have been in existence create difficulties in making any overall analysis. Nevertheless, we used the data that were available as well as information obtained from our questionnaires and site visits to develop an overview of the results to date. These data indicated that while there is no evidence that boot camps significantly reduce recidivism, they do reduce costs and crowding. However, the reductions appear to be related to shorter programs rather than more cost-effective activities.

**Boot Camp Costs  
 Compared to Probation  
 and Traditional  
 Imprisonment**

Building and operating prisons is an expensive enterprise, and a major selling point for boot camps is that they reduce prison corrections costs. As noted earlier, most questionnaire respondents believed that the camps saved them money. These sentiments were echoed in our site visits and in the formal evaluations of individual programs.

New York is the best example of reported cost savings. The state estimates that care and custody costs for a participant in its boot camp program averaged \$19,000 less than if the inmate was sentenced to a traditional

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prison. As of September 30, 1991, New York estimated it had saved a total of \$83.6 million in operating costs. Moreover, the state estimated it had saved \$93.7 million over this same period by not having to build as many new facilities, for a total savings of \$177.3 million.

Georgia also found the boot camp program to be less costly than its prisons. In its January 1991 evaluation, the state estimated its average cost per boot camp participant at \$5,294, compared to \$7,913 to \$19,861 for other groups of inmates. The boot camp costs would have been higher than the costs of probation, however, which averaged \$2,279 to \$4,279 per person.

Other states also reported cost savings. Florida said that despite difficulties in projecting amounts, it estimated program cost savings at \$1.25 million during a 25-month period from 1987 through 1989. In its August 1990 evaluation, NJ estimated that Louisiana's boot camp program saved the state \$7,831.93 per participant.

In each case, the cost savings were attributable to savings on a program basis rather than a daily basis. In fact, we found that average daily costs for boot camps tended to be higher than those for the traditional prisons to which the boot camp participants could have been sentenced, because of the intensive nature of the training and the need for more staff in the boot camps.

New York, for example, reported for 1991-92 an average daily cost of \$69.33 for its boot camp program, compared with \$50.94 for a minimum-security prison and \$59.75 for a medium-security prison. NJ calculated that Louisiana spent \$29.28 a day for boot camp participants, compared to \$27.98 for other inmates. Georgia reported identical costs for all levels; however, Georgia officials said this was due to an accounting system that did not segregate costs in a way that the differences could be calculated. These officials believed their boot camp programs cost more to run on a daily basis but did not know how much. Similarly, Florida and Oklahoma officials said the daily costs of boot camp participants were higher but could not calculate the differences.

The cost savings, therefore, are attributable to less time in incarceration. For example, the New York boot camp participant spends 180 days in a camp, compared to the 1 to 3 years he or she could face in prison. In fact, the longest period of incarceration in any state is 240 days, whereas the original sentences could be 5 years or more in 22 of the 26 states.

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In our questionnaires to the 26 states, we asked for comparative costs on operating boot camps and other prison facilities. The information provided was of limited use. Some statistics were not available, and the amounts reported often differed largely among the states. In addition, we were not able to do any meaningful validation or verification of the statistics provided.

At the same time, the questionnaires supported the premise that any cost savings from boot camps were on an overall program basis rather than a daily basis. For daily costs per inmate, 16 states provided comparisons of boot camps and facilities housing similar inmates, with 4 responding that costs were the same, 9 responding that boot camps cost more, and 3 responding that boot camps cost less. For overall program costs, 16 states provided comparisons, and each of these responded that boot camps cost less, ranging from 8 to 74 percent of the costs at facilities for similar inmates.

NJ's 1989 overview study, which analyzed program results in four states, supported the view that boot camp programs should be less costly because of the shorter time served. The study noted:

"In all states (even those with higher si [shock incarceration] costs per day), officials believed that si cost the state considerably less per inmate than regular imprisonment because si inmates are confined for shorter periods."

The NJ study also noted, however, that these costs would not necessarily accrue if the states placed offenders in boot camp programs who otherwise would have been placed on probation—a practice known as net-widening. In addition, the cost savings do not take into consideration the additional costs that would be incurred if persons are reincarcerated.

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**Boot Camps May Not  
Necessarily Reduce  
Recidivism**

Because boot camps by definition represent an attempt to steer individuals away from continued criminal behavior, reducing recidivism would seem to be among the most important measures of program success. Although NJ officials say that this is the case, they also say, as with corrections in general, recidivism is one of the most difficult areas to measure. Some of the problems in measuring it include determining the time after release at which recidivism should be measured, comparing inmates with different characteristics, tracking inmates who may have been arrested in other jurisdictions, and even deciding what recidivism means (e.g., rearrest, reconviction, or committing the same type of crime).

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Some of the states have attempted to measure recidivism but with varying success and results. For one thing, the data available are incomplete—one problem being that boot camps are still too new for determining long-range success. For another, the data do not provide a clear indication that boot camps lead to lower recidivism.

Again, at the time of our review, New York had developed the best recidivism data, comparing boot camp participants with three comparison groups consisting of inmates who (1) would have met the program eligibility requirements but were incarcerated before the program started (pre-shock), (2) were considered for the program but did not wish to participate (considered), or (3) were removed from the program and returned to other facilities (removals). As shown in table 3.2, New York's January 1992 evaluation report calculated the percentages of each group returned to prison at 12 months, 18 months, and 24 months after release.

**Table 3.2: Recidivism Rates for New York Boot Camp and Comparison Group Inmates for Inmates Released as of May 1991**

<b>Group</b>	<b>March 1988 to March 1990 (12 months)</b>	<b>March 1988 to September 1989 (18 months)</b>	<b>March 1988 to March 1989 (24 months)</b>
Boot camp graduates	14	29	40
Pre-shock	19	34	44
Considered	20	36	47
Removals	22	40	51

Source: "The Fourth Annual Report to the Legislature; Shock Incarceration - Shock Parole Supervision." New York Department of Correctional Services and Division of Parole.

Although these numbers indicate a lower recidivism rate for boot camp participants, they also raise certain questions. First, 40 percent of the boot camp participants were incarcerated within 2 years of release. In addition, the differences in the categories tend to decrease over time. For example, after 1 year, the recidivism rate for pre-shock inmates is 136 percent of the return rate for shock (boot camp) inmates. After 2 years, the rate for pre-shock inmates is 110 percent of shock participants.

Also, the categories do not necessarily offer direct comparisons. For example, the pre-shock inmates committed their crimes at an earlier date, spent more time in prison, and presumably were older on average upon release. The considered inmates and the removals by definition had either made a voluntary decision not to participate or for some reason did not meet program requirements.

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Georgia also tracked recidivism in its most recent evaluation report, comparing boot camp participants with four groups of prison inmates and three groups of probationers. Table 3.3 compares boot camp recidivism rates with those for two prison-inmate groups that had no prior incarcerations and for three probationer groups. From an eligibility standpoint, these five groups are most nearly like the boot camp participants.

**Table 3.3: Recidivism Rates for Georgia Boot Camp and Comparison Group Inmates**

Category	Number of months after release					
	6	12	24	36	48	60
<b>Boot camp</b>	11.3	24.4	37.8	42.7	50.1	51.5
<b>Prison Inmates</b>						
No prior incarceration; under 6 months served	10.4	24.2	42.2	51.4	55.6	57.4
No prior incarceration; 6 to 36 months served	10.1	26.5	43.2	50.8	54.6	58.7
<b>Probationers</b>						
Intensive probation supervision	16.6	30.9	44.9	50.9	52.1	53.5
Diversion center	13.5	20.3	30.9	39.9	41.9	43.7
Regular probation	8.9	15.8	24.5	30.4	32.5	34.1

Source: "Special Alternative Incarceration: Evaluation." Georgia Department of Corrections.

Like New York's, Georgia's numbers do not give a clear indication that the boot camps have been successful in reducing recidivism. After 4 years, over half the participants were again in prison. In addition, while the boot camp rates were lower overall, they actually exceeded the prison rates in the early months and the regular probation rates throughout.

Also, the comparisons may not be relevant. The primary problem is that until 1991, Georgia's boot camp program was a probation-alternative program. There is no way to know whether judges sentenced persons to the camps who otherwise would have gone to prison. Moreover, the probation-alternative camps are only one component of Georgia's current program.

Florida's evaluation report was based on a comparison of relatively small groups consisting of 71 boot camp participants and 176 other inmates with similar characteristics between December 1987 and October 1989. Overall, the reincarceration rate was 25.3 percent for the boot camp inmates, compared to 27.8 percent for the others. The overall difference was caused

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by the control group having a larger percentage of probation violators. However, the rate was the same for those recommitted for new felonies, and the boot camp inmates actually had a higher rate for new misdemeanors.

Other studies were even more discouraging about the ability of boot camps to reduce recidivism. An evaluation by Oklahoma in 1986 indicated that boot camp participants could have had a higher rate of recidivism than other inmates, although officials were not sure the statistics were adequate for comparisons nor reflective of the current program. A more recent, informal analysis indicated that the boot camp recidivism rate is roughly comparable to that of other inmates. The Louisiana study by NJ found no significant differences in new arrests among boot camp graduates as compared to probationers and regular prison parolees.

In an article on its annual boot camp survey for 1991, an NJ official wrote that "no state has reported a statistically significant difference in recidivism when boot camps graduates' performance is compared to that of similar offenders serving different types of sentences." The article emphasized that the data were preliminary and should not be considered conclusive at this point. This emphasis echoes NJ's position in the Louisiana evaluation, that is, not having been able to reduce recidivism to date does not mean that the program has failed; it simply may be too early to tell.

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**Effect of Boot Camps on  
Prison Crowding**

According to NJ, boot camps can reduce prison crowding if two conditions are met. First, there must be a sufficient number of boot camp participants compared to the inmate population systemwide. Second, the participants must be drawn from a population of prison-bound offenders, rather than persons who otherwise would be placed on probation.

In its 1991 survey of state boot camp programs, NJ did not believe the first qualification was being met, since most programs were so small. NJ noted that only New York and Texas had more than 300 beds in each of their programs and that boot camp space did not account for a significant number of offenders in any of the states.

Our own survey of the states indicates things may be changing. Currently, New York has space for 1,500 inmates in its program and Georgia has space for 2,773. Maryland, Michigan, Oklahoma, and Texas have space for over 400 each. Fourteen states are considering or have developed



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expansion plans. Moreover, given the short duration of most boot camp programs, there is substantially more turnover of boot camp participants than in traditional prisons, so the overall effect may be greater.

At the same time, however, boot camps still represent a relatively small part of state inmate populations. The camps in the 26 states responding to our questionnaire had a total capacity of 8,800, and some of these camps held inmates who otherwise would have been on probation. By comparison, the overall state prison population in 1991 was over 751,806.

The second qualification NJJ cited for reducing crowding is even more difficult to measure, since it is impossible to tell in many cases what sentence a judge would have given or what facility a correctional system would have selected had the boot camp not existed. In addition, the amount of time actually spent in prison may vary, depending on such factors as parole eligibility and sentencing statutes. Oklahoma, for example, has a law that allows for the judicial review of a sentence after 120 days, at which time the offender faces a number of sentencing options, including release. Twenty-one of the 26 states we surveyed believed that the camps had been successful to at least some extent in helping them in reducing crowding.

In their evaluation reports, both New York and Louisiana identified the reduction of prison crowding, or the demand for bedspace, as the prime objective of their programs. Both also believed that this objective is being achieved to some extent as a result of the boot camp programs. New York reported that for its first 4,411 shock releases, it saved 1,392 beds and avoided \$93.65 million in capital construction. According to NJJ, Louisiana's much smaller program reduced its bedspace needs by 154 beds a year.

Florida's evaluation did not list the reduction of crowding as a specific program objective. However, the state said its central objective is to "deter repeat criminality by fostering productive and responsible life adjustments in a brief though intensive correctional experience representing significant cost savings to the state." Florida estimated that 39,759 inmate days would have been added to its corrections system load during a 25-month period had offenders served their sentences in traditional facilities rather than in the boot camp. This estimate was the source of the estimated \$15.25 million in cost savings. Thus, reducing crowding is at least an indirect program objective.

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Another factor that could affect crowding levels in the future is the impact of the boot camps on recidivism. However, the impact in this area will not be known until the states have more experience with the programs and have evaluated their effectiveness.

**Other Data on Boot Camp Graduates**

Although reductions in the overall costs of corrections, recidivism, and prison crowding are three overall goals of boot camp programs, achieving these goals is not necessarily the only measure of success. According to an NJ official, another important factor is the degree of success—such as educational accomplishments, employment, and income—achieved by persons who do not return to prison. No significant evaluations have been performed on this subject. State and federal officials told us they believe this enhanced success and a higher quality of life will be significant benefits derived from the boot camp programs.

No significant evaluations have been performed on this subject. However, at the locations we visited, boot camp graduates we interviewed said that their lives were much improved because of the boot camp experience. State officials noted that they did not usually hear these types of responses from those who were released from traditional prisons.

Although it had not evaluated the overall success of its graduates, New York had developed statistics on the employment rate of boot camp graduates as opposed to three comparison groups. In these statistics, the progress of 2,896 inmates released between October 1, 1990, and March 31, 1991, was tracked. As shown in table 3.4, the boot camp graduates were more likely to be employed and to be enrolled in community programs aimed at helping them reintegrate in society.

**Table 3.4: Success of New York Boot Camp Graduates and Comparison Group Parolees in Obtaining Employment and Enrollment in Community Reintegration Programs**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Employed (percent)</b>	<b>Enrolled in community program (percent)</b>
Boot camp graduates	955	75	79
Pre-shock	420	48	51
Considered	1,110	35	47
Removals	411	34	50

Source: "The Fourth Annual Report to the Legislature."

New York officials attributed the higher employment rate for boot camp graduates to the higher motivation and spirit of the graduates as well as the dedicated services provided graduates within the first 6 months after release.

In its Louisiana evaluation, NIJ noted that boot camp graduates appeared to have more positive attitudes. Moreover, the graduates' views of their experiences were seen as sharply different from inmates released from traditional prisons. However, NIJ also pointed out that to some extent these views may simply indicate that the boot camp inmates, all volunteers, were "self-selected," that is, those inmates most interested in improving their lives volunteered. NIJ said that not enough was known to reach a conclusion at the time.

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## Conclusions

The states generally are pleased with their boot camp programs. Although very few programs have been formally evaluated, officials believe that these programs provide a viable alternative to traditional forms of incarceration and have done much to instill discipline, improve self-esteem, and provide education for all participants and treatment to drug offenders.

It is still too early to tell whether boot camps will reduce the overall costs of corrections, inmate recidivism, and prison crowding in the long term. To date, however, the camps appear to be less costly than traditional forms of incarceration. These savings are not due to lower daily inmate costs—in fact, the reverse appears to be the case—but rather are realized from the shorter periods of incarceration.

The camps also appear to reduce crowding, primarily for the same reason that costs are lower. Inmates are in the camps for a shorter periods of time than if they had served their original sentences in traditional facilities. The overall impact camps have on crowding will not be known, however, until more data is available to show (1) whether the participants would have been sentenced to prison rather than probation and (2) how boot camp participants and other inmates compare in recidivism rates.

Recidivism is still an unknown factor. Very few states have conducted studies on recidivism, and those that have did not always use methodologies and comparison groups capable of measuring boot camp effectiveness. In those cases where recidivism has been measured, the results indicated that there is little difference between boot camp inmates

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and other inmates, particularly the longer the time after release. Reduced recidivism is important in determining whether rehabilitation is achieved and in measuring long-range effects on costs and crowding.

Also unknown is the degree to which boot camp graduates enjoy a higher degree of success or quality of life than inmates released from traditional prisons. State officials believed these areas ultimately would prove to be among the camps' greatest benefits.

# The Federal Boot Camp Program Is Fully Operational, but Its Impact on the Federal Prison System Is Not Yet Clear

BOP's boot camp program—the Intensive Confinement Program—was established in 1990. To date, there is one camp for men and one for women in the entire federal system. The first participants left BOP custody in 1992, so the long-term effects on costs, recidivism, and crowding are unknown.

Although similar in appearance to the state programs, the federal program differs in some important respects. One difference is that it does not include the early release incentives usually offered by the states. In addition, statutory eligibility is more restricted, and BOP added a program supplement under its existing authority to ensure it had enough participants to operate the camps. Notwithstanding these additions, the program remains small in relation to the overall federal inmate population.

## The Intensive Confinement Program: Three Components, Two Types of Eligibility

BOP developed the federal version of a prison boot camp following the enactment of special shock incarceration authority in the Crime Control Act of 1990. BOP refers to the overall program as the Intensive Confinement Program and the boot camp stage itself as the Intensive Confinement Center. Two such camps now are in operation. A camp for men opened in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, in December 1990, and a camp for women opened in Bryan, Texas, in July 1992.<sup>1</sup>

The boot camp stage is only the first step of the program. Unlike the state programs, a federal participant is not given early release after the boot camp stage is over. Instead, the boot camp graduate is referred to a Community Corrections Center—most commonly a halfway house—near his or her home. After a successful period at the halfway house stage, the participant is eligible to complete his or her sentence on home confinement.<sup>2</sup>

As administered by BOP, the program actually serves two categories of eligible inmates—volunteers who qualify under the 1990 act (Category A inmates) and volunteers BOP has added under its general authorities (Category B inmates). The 1990 act (at 18 U.S.C. 4046) allows BOP to operate a boot camp program for volunteers sentenced to a term of imprisonment of more than 12 but not more than 30 months. The statute provides that BOP may place an inmate in a boot-camp-type program for a maximum of 6 months. If the inmate successfully completes the program,

<sup>1</sup>The first group of women participants graduated from the camp on January 13, 1992.

<sup>2</sup>In home confinement, an offender is usually required to remain in his or her home, except for preapproved time periods and purposes, such as a doctor's appointment or regular employment.

BOP may fix the length and conditions of his or her remaining time in custody.

Originally, BOP intended to limit program participation to Category A inmates—those who were just coming into the federal prison system and met the eligibility requirements in 18 U.S.C 4046. However, the pool of inmates meeting the requirements was not sufficient to operate the program. To increase participation, BOP extended program eligibility to inmates in the general prison population having original sentences of 60 months or less and no more than 24 months left to serve—Category B inmates. BOP established this supplemental eligibility under 18 U.S.C. 3621, which authorizes BOP to designate the place of a prisoner's confinement and to transfer a prisoner from one BOP facility to another. Adding Category B inmates had the desired effect of increasing program participation.

For both groups of inmates, BOP has established additional eligibility standards to supplement those set by statute. Specifically, BOP restricts program participation to individuals who are

- serving their first period of incarceration or who have a minor history of prior incarceration,
- qualified for minimum security,
- 35 years of age or less (men only), and
- without medical restrictions and capable of participating in the rigorous program.

In addition to meeting the basic eligibility requirements, program participants must be selected and screened for suitability. Inmates entering the system ordinarily must be recommended by the sentencing judge or by BOP with the consent of the sentencing judge. Inmates already in the system are recommended by the wardens of the facilities in which they are incarcerated; however, BOP still obtains the sentencing judge's consent to ensure the placement will not interfere with any sentencing objective.

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## **BOP Has Different Options for Category A and B Boot Camp Graduates**

Because Category A and B inmates enter the boot camp program under different statutory authorities, BOP does not have the same options for managing Category A and B boot camp graduates. For Category A inmates, the Crime Control Act of 1990 in effect created two exceptions to

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otherwise applicable federal sentencing guidelines and statutes—exceptions not applicable to Category B participants.

The Sentencing Reform Act of 1984 (P.L. 98-473, 98 Stat. 1987) provided (at 18 U.S.C. 3624(b)) that inmates may not generally be released from custody until they have served the full sentence imposed by the court less any credit of up to 54 days a year for satisfactory behavior. Thus, an inmate sentenced to 30 months—the maximum qualifying sentence for Category A boot camp participants—and who earned the maximum credit for satisfactory behavior would have to serve all but about 135 days of his or her sentence before being eligible for release from BOP custody.

However, 18 U.S.C. 4046(c), added by the Crime Control Act of 1990, provides BOP the authority to release Category A inmates before they have served their full sentence. Specifically, section 4046(c) provides that an inmate graduating from the boot camp shall remain in BOP custody “for such period (not to exceed the remainder of the prison term otherwise required by law to be served by that inmate), and under such conditions, as the Bureau deems appropriate.” This section by its terms provides BOP with the authority to release eligible inmates before their terms would otherwise expire.<sup>3</sup> By authorizing the early release of eligible inmates, section 4046(c) in effect created an exception to otherwise applicable federal sentencing laws and guidelines.

Second, section 4046(c) provides BOP with broad discretion in setting the prerelease custody conditions for Category A inmates, in effect exempting them from certain restrictions applicable to the general inmate population. Most importantly, BOP can assign inmates to extended periods in home confinement and other prerelease custody without regard to the provisions of 18 U.S.C. 3624(c), which limit such custody to 6 months or 10 percent of an inmate’s original sentence, whichever is less.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>In addition, the legislative history of the statute that enacted section 4046 indicates that one of the section’s basic purposes was to authorize BOP to use early releases as a component of shock incarceration and thus follow the state model of having inmates serve a “shorter, but more arduous, term.” (See H.R. Rep. No. 681(I), 101<sup>st</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> Sess. 151-153 (1990)). Congress indicated that BOP already had general legal authority to operate prison boot camps, but because early releases are not permitted under federal sentencing laws and guidelines BOP needed special statutory authority to release inmates before the expiration of their terms. See H.R. Rep. No. 681(I), earlier, and Sentencing Option Act of 1989, hearing before the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice of the House Committee on the Judiciary, 101<sup>st</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> Sess. 18-19 (1989).

<sup>4</sup>Under the federal sentencing guidelines, only certain inmates sentenced to terms of no more than 16 months are eligible for “split sentences,” which involve extended periods of prerelease custody. For other inmates, the term of prerelease custody is limited by 18 U.S.C. 3624(c). In contrast, section 4046 authorizes the boot camp program and extended prerelease custody as a component of the program for inmates having original sentences over 12 months, up to a maximum of 30 months.

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Because Category B inmates do not qualify for the boot camp program under section 4046, BOP does not have the authority to release them early and must adhere to the section 3624(c) requirements governing home confinement. Consequently, BOP must apply different post-camp custody criteria to Category A and B inmates who graduate from the boot camp stage.

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**The Boot Camp Stage**

The focal point of the program is the boot camp stage. The boot camp is a minimum-security camp where, for a period of 6 months, the participant is subjected to a regimen of drills, work, training, treatment, and education, with an emphasis on discipline, the development of self-esteem, and teamwork. Until recently, the only boot camp was the one for men at Lewisburg, and consequently, most experience has been with that camp.

Upon arrival at the Lewisburg camp, a participant is put through a 2-week preliminary period of admissions and orientation. During this time, the participant becomes familiar with the mission, purpose, and scope of the camp and receives instruction on, among other things, the rules, the disciplinary process, safety procedures, behavioral expectations, and health services. After this initial period, a case manager completes the screening process to ensure the participant is suitable for boot camp placement. The participant is then given the camp uniform and standard personal articles, with all other personal gear stored for the duration of his stay. The participant also must be medically cleared before he can participate in the strenuous physical activities.

The men's camp is located outside the walls of the maximum-security Lewisburg Penitentiary, with the participants housed in modular buildings that were once used for a minimum-security prison camp. The boot camp participants work at running the prison farm and maintaining the grounds of the entire 60-plus acre facility. Despite the collocation and shared resources, they do not have contact with the maximum-security inmates.

The stated purpose of the boot camp is "to place offenders in a highly structured, no frills environment as a means of promoting personal development, self control, and discipline, thereby reducing the potential for future incarceration." Thus, the program features the following:

- a due-process system of discipline;
- a strict daily regimen of physical training;
- military drills and ceremony;



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- labor-intensive work assignments;
- adult basic education;
- vocational training;
- drug and alcohol counseling;
- instruction in stress management, life-coping skills, parenting, family budgeting, nutrition; and
- other programs aimed at successfully reintegrating the individual back into the community.

The workweek extends for 6 days, and the workday lasts for 16 hours. There is little free time except for Sundays and holidays, when visitors are permitted. Participants are held to high standards on physical neatness, adherence to the rules, and maintenance of an orderly bunk. Participants are not subjected to verbal abuse or intimidation, and no summary discipline is used. Instructors do not require physical exercise unless they themselves participate.

The Lewisburg boot camp is designed to accommodate 192 inmates at any one time. The inmates are subdivided into 4 platoons of approximately 48 inmates, with each platoon assigned its own living area and functioning as a separate unit. The platoons come into the camp on a staggered basis, so that a platoon is now graduating every 2 months. Through November 1992, eight platoons had graduated from the camp, and another was scheduled to graduate in January 1993. Table 4.1 provides data on the 668 inmates who had participated in the boot camp program for men since its inception in December 1990 through December 1992.

**Table 4.1: Inmates Processed Through the Boot Camp for Men as of December 1992**

Category	Inmates	
	Number	Percent
Graduates	416 <sup>a</sup>	62.2
Voluntary withdrawals	72	10.8
Medical withdrawals	14	2.1
Failures	23 <sup>b</sup>	3.4
Still in program	143	21.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>a</sup>Three of these inmates were not eligible for halfway house placement; thus, only 413 actually graduated to the halfway house stage.

<sup>b</sup>Includes 22 disciplinary transfers and 1 remanded to the Immigration and Naturalization Service for deportation.

Source: BOP.

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The boot camp for women is located at the Bryan Federal Prison Camp for women in Bryan, Texas, and began operations in July 1992. The capacity of the Bryan boot camp is 120 inmates, consisting of 2 groups of 60 each. The first group graduated in January 1993. The Bryan camp features hard work, with the participants cutting trees, clearing brush, and performing general maintenance and groundskeeping functions in the Sam Houston National Forest. The women's camp operates much like the men's camp, except that (1) there is no age limit for women and (2) the women are not divided into platoons.

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**The Halfway House Stage**

Participants who do not complete the boot camp are returned to a traditional federal facility, while those who graduate move on to the second component, the Community Confinement Center or halfway house, which itself is divided into two phases of approximately equal time. As of December 1992, 413 boot camp graduates had moved on to the halfway house component at facilities throughout the country.

During the first step of the halfway house stage, the participant is allowed to work in the community under close supervision but must remain at the halfway house during all other times unless given special permission to leave for religious or specific program purposes. All visits with family and all leisure activities must take place at the halfway house.

Participants who successfully complete the first step, move on to the second step, in which they have more freedom. They continue to work under close supervision but are allowed to visit in the community until curfew time at the halfway house. They also may be given weekend passes and furloughs.

Normally, the halfway house will be near the participant's home. Most of these houses are privately operated facilities that are paid a contracted daily fee for the federal inmates they serve. In cases where no halfway house exists, BOP may contract with a local correctional center to function as a halfway house.

During their stay at the halfway house, the participants work, attend counseling and treatment sessions, and become reacclimated to the community. As in a regular prison, they also are subject to routine and random drug tests. Technically, the participants are still incarcerated and can be disciplined for violation of halfway house rules and procedures. Such discipline includes returning an individual to the general prison

population. At one halfway house we visited, for example, two boot camp graduates had been returned to a federal prison to complete their sentences. One had tested positive for a controlled substance, while the other had missed curfew by a few hours without contacting the center in advance or having a legitimate reason for the violation.

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## **The Home Confinement Stage**

The last stage of the program before a participant's release is home confinement. This stage continues the community-readjustment emphasis of the halfway house with one important difference—the participant is allowed to live at home. Participants are allowed to move back in with their families or, in some cases, to find their own accommodations.

Despite the increased freedom, the participants maintain close ties with the halfway house. The halfway house officials monitor their whereabouts, visit their homes and jobs, and administer periodic drug tests. Participants are required to call in every day, come to the halfway house for testing, and attend counseling sessions at the halfway house at least twice a week. As with the halfway house stage, the participants can be disciplined for not following the rules, including being returned to the general prison population.

In some cases, home confinement is administered by probation officers under the Probation and Pretrial Services Division of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts rather than the halfway house where the inmate was previously assigned. This pilot program utilizes electronic monitoring by contractors to provide information on the physical location of the participant. Originally limited to 14 U.S. court districts nationwide, the program has been expanded to about 60 districts, and a contractor is being sought to extend it nationwide.

Home confinement is still considered incarceration but is the least restrictive form of custody available to federal inmates. Moreover, it plays a much larger role in the program than for non-program inmates, who generally are not released to home confinement except for the last 30 to 60 days. Some program participants may be on home confinement for more than a year.

The home confinement portion is the least tested portion of the program, since the program itself is so new. By November 30, 1992, a total of 77 program participants had completed all three stages of the program and been released from BOP custody.

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## **BOP Officials Believe the Program Is Beneficial**

BOP officials were pleased with the boot camp program to date, although they said it was too early to determine its long-term effectiveness in reducing costs, crowding, and recidivism. They said the major difference they saw was in the attitudes of the program participants as opposed to inmates in traditional prisons. These officials believed the increased discipline, the heavy emphasis on work, and the nonthreatening environment all tended to produce participants who were able to show a positive adjustment to prison life and a willingness to correct their lives. Moreover, they said the increase in pride and self-esteem was evident, as many of these young men had been forced to accomplish something on their own for the first time in their lives.

The boot camp administrator gave examples of participants who had been affected positively by the camp. One participant, for example, had reduced his weight by more than 100 pounds over the course of the 6-month program. Other participants had exhibited marked changes in attitude. Typically, the participants left the boot camp in far better physical condition than they were in when they entered. The administrator also said the individuals leaving the camp seemed to be more willing to accept accountability for their own actions and had an enhanced ability to function as members of a team.

The administrator also noted the positive influence the program had on BOP staff. He noted staff members' willingness to work long hours, often voluntarily and without extra pay, because they believed they were seeing results. In addition, he said the staff adapted readily to the tougher regimen of the program, performing calisthenics and drills alongside the participants. He said this staff attitude made the participants even more willing to work hard and also helped the overall morale within the camp.

The halfway house officials with whom we spoke also believed the program was having a positive effect on the participants, although it was too early for them to tell how successful the program would be in the long term. They said the program graduates seemed to be more focused, were self-motivated, and had more pride and self-esteem. One of the halfway houses had received four boot camp graduates, and all were functioning well. The other had received six boot camp graduates, with four still in the program.

BOP officials we contacted pointed out the common problem in corrections: No matter how an individual responds while incarcerated, the real test comes upon his or her return to the community. Frequently, the

participant returns to the same family and community problems he or she left but now with a prison record. In addition, the individual returns to the same temptations, including drugs and alcohol. The officials said this is where the best plans begin to break down and the individual must get by on his or her own. The officials believe that the strength of the program is in (1) providing the motivation, the self-esteem, and the confidence necessary for the graduates to overcome these obstacles and (2) allowing for a gradual readjustment to the community through the halfway house and home confinement.

At the time of our review, BOP had completed no formal evaluations of the program. However, officials were in the process of designing an evaluation model and collecting preliminary information.

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## **Current Requirements May Restrict the Program's Effectiveness**

The program has not been in operation long enough to determine whether it will reduce recidivism, prison crowding, and corrections costs. As currently designed, however, its impact is likely to be minimal even if it ultimately proves to be a success. One reason is that the program is simply too small to make any real difference overall. In addition, while the program may be less expensive than traditional prisons, BOP does not grant early releases and thus cannot realize the same levels of savings in costs that the states have reported. Whether BOP's approach will result in lower recidivism and, thus, lower long-term costs remains to be seen.

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## **The Program Is Too Small to Make a Difference Systemwide**

As presently structured, the program is too small an effort to have a sizeable impact on costs, recidivism, or prison crowding within the federal prison system as a whole. Fully occupied, the two camps will house 312 participants, or less than 0.5 percent of the federal prison population.

Several eligibility factors work together to limit the program's size, some created by the special boot camp statute itself and others by BOP's own requirements. These factors include the limits on the original sentence length, the age limit for men, the requirement that the participants be minimum security, and the restrictions on previous incarcerations. Each of these factors is similar to requirements in state systems and is consistent with the generally accepted goal of targeting boot camp programs to offenders who are young, impressionable, nonviolent, and with a minor criminal history. However, the federal inmate population differs from those of the states in that federal inmates tend to be older, more likely to

**Statutory Requirements Help**  
**Keep Program Small**

have been incarcerated before, and drawn from a broader geographical area.

A primary reason for the small number of Category A participants is that section 4046 restricts program participation to volunteers with an original sentence of 12 to 30 months. As discussed earlier, the number of inmates meeting this requirement proved to be so small that BOP—under its existing authority in section 3621 to choose the place of an inmate's incarceration—decided to supplement the program with Category B inmates drawn from the existing prison population. Through December 1992, 267, or 59.8 percent, of the 413 men who graduated from the boot camp portion of the program were Category B participants.

Although adding Category B inmates gave BOP a sufficient number of participants to begin its program, it did not add enough to have a significant impact on the federal prison system as a whole. BOP estimates that, as of June 1992, only 1,433 inmates, or about 2.1 percent of the inmate population, would have qualified under either the Category A or B requirements on sentence length.

The Category B supplement was intended to be a temporary measure to ensure that the program had enough participants to operate effectively. BOP officials believed that over time, enough Category A inmates would come into the system on a regular basis so that the Category B inmates would no longer be needed. This appears to be occurring; BOP officials said that Category A inmates constitute about 90 percent of program entrants since the summer of 1992.

At the same time, BOP officials are so pleased with the response they have received from Category B inmates that they plan to keep them as part of the program. The officials said that Category B inmates often are among the best participants, since they have already served part of their sentence in the traditional prison system and thus have a means for comparison. The BOP officials said that operating a program with two categories of participants required additional administration, since BOP has much greater discretion over the post-boot-camp custody of Category A participants than it does Category B participants. They did not see this as a problem, however.

**BOP Requirements Also**  
**Restrict Participation**

The restrictions on age, security level, and incarceration history were added by BOP. Although they agree that these restrictions limit the pool of eligible participants, BOP officials said they were necessary to ensure a

population that was most likely to benefit from the program. The officials believed that older inmates were more resistant to change, that inmates above minimum-security levels were potentially violent or too high a security risk, and that those who had served previous prison terms had already shown a propensity for continued criminal behavior.

BOP did not have statistics showing how many inmates were excluded by its own eligibility requirements. However, the requirements do have a limiting effect. In 1991, for example, 49.4 percent of all federal inmates were more than 35 years old, 79.7 percent were in custody levels other than minimum security, and most had been in prison before. The only inmates in these groups eligible for the program were women over 35 and inmates whose prior incarceration was considered "minor."

On the basis of its early experience with the program, BOP has begun to reconsider some of the requirements it places on program participants. In House Appropriation Committee hearings on BOP's fiscal year 1992 appropriations, BOP's Director said the current eligibility requirements had been considered necessary for the federal inmate population, in which the average inmate is 37 years old and many are serving their fourth sentence. He said that at the time the program was created, such inmates were not considered "prime candidates for these kinds of intensive boot camp-type of programs."

The Director also said, however, that the initial staff reaction to the program was so positive that BOP might consider expanding the program. He said that while the focus would still be on nonviolent inmates, some staff had proposed increasing the limits on age, original sentence length, and the time in the program itself.

At the time of our review, BOP had not made any changes—other than the addition of Category B inmates—to increase the size of the program or expand eligibility. BOP officials told us they were considering opening another camp for men on the West Coast but that no action had been taken to date because of budgetary constraints.

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**Without Early Releases,  
the Potential for Cost and  
Inmate Population  
Reductions Is Limited**

A major selling point for state boot camp programs has been their lower costs. Although the camps themselves tend to be more expensive than traditional prisons on a daily basis, the states typically release the boot camp participants earlier, thereby saving on the overall costs of incarceration.

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Like the states' programs, the federal boot camp program costs more on a daily basis than the facilities to which the inmates would have gone otherwise. BOP estimated the daily cost per participant at \$46.42 for the Lewisburg camp and \$45.15 for the Bryan camp, compared to \$40.15 for other minimum-security facilities nationwide. The costs of halfway houses vary widely across the nation but average about \$32.50 a day. The rate BOP paid the halfway houses for monitoring home confinement is one-half the rate it pays when they serve as traditional halfway houses. The home confinement cost is less—as low as \$6.00 a day—in those cases in which it is contracted by the Federal Probation Service.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the higher costs of the camp, incarcerating inmates in the program rather than in traditional minimum-security facilities may be less expensive. This is because after participants graduate from the boot camp they go on to halfway houses and home confinement, which are less expensive than minimum-security prison camps.

Using the average costs discussed earlier, we compared the costs for hypothetical male inmates serving 24-month sentences. We assumed that a Category A inmate would serve 6 months in the boot camp, 8 months in a halfway house, and 10 months in home confinement; a Category B inmate would spend 6 months in the boot camp, 12 months in a halfway house, and 6 months in home confinement; and a non-program inmate would spend 22 months in a prison camp and 2 months in home confinement. Based on these assumptions, the overall costs of incarceration would be \$21,074.69 for a Category A inmate, \$23,268.44 for a Category B inmate, and \$27,875.50 for a non-program inmate. Thus, compared to costs for a non-program inmate, a savings of 24.5 percent for the Category A inmate and 16.3 percent for the Category B inmate is realized.

Despite these potential cost savings, any comparisons of the costs of the program and traditional facilities are subject to caveats. First, the savings vary depending on the length of the sentence and the amount of time spent in each stage. The savings are greater when the sentence is longer and more time is spent in home confinement. Second, our comparisons were based on national averages; the actual costs of halfway houses and home confinement vary widely. Finally, the inmate not assigned to the boot camp may have been eligible to spend some or all of his sentence in a

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<sup>5</sup>This amount includes only the contractor's cost. It does not include the cost of the probation officer's supervision of the offender. The Federal Probation Service is part of the federal judiciary and supervises persons sentenced to probation and other nonprison terms as well as those who have been sentenced to a period of supervision after their release from prison.



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halfway house anyway, which would result in lower costs than assigning him to a prison camp or the boot camp program.

In addition, although the program may be a less expensive form of incarcerating federal inmates, BOP cannot experience the levels of cost savings and correctional system population reductions reported by the states because BOP does not release participants early—a practice based partially on BOP policy and partially on the law governing Category B participants. Although, in our view, 18 U.S.C. 4046(c) authorizes BOP to release Category A participants early, BOP chooses not to do so. Category B participants cannot be released early because they are not eligible for the program under section 4046(a) and thus are subject to serving out their full terms in accordance with federal sentencing laws.

Releasing participants after their graduation from the boot camp would reduce incarceration costs substantially for individual participants. In the hypothetical cases discussed earlier, for example, releasing a Category A participant after the boot camp portion of the program would result in overall costs of \$8,448.44—about half the current costs for a Category A participant. BOP acknowledges that section 4046(c) appears to give it the authority to release Category A participants early. However, it does not do so as a matter of policy and does not plan to revise this policy. In a November 10, 1992, letter to us, BOP's Director gave the following rationale for this policy:

"In regard to the potential use of early release, we believe there are sufficient incentives to encourage inmate participation in the ICC [Intensive Confinement Center] program without allowing early release. In addition, continued custody after completion of the ICC program assists us in monitoring the rehabilitative progress of an inmate while also meeting the desires of the sentencing court and insuring the maximum protection of the public."

Within the program, BOP can reduce costs by assigning the participants to longer periods of home confinement, since home confinement costs less than halfway houses. Again, however, BOP has much less discretion over the amount of time Category B participants spend in home confinement, since these participants are subject to limitations on prerelease custody in section 18 U.S.C. 3624(c). Thus, Category A participants may, at BOP's discretion, spend as long as 14 months in home confinement while Category B participants are limited to the lesser of 6 months or 10 percent of the original sentence.

Not releasing participants early also precludes the program from reducing the overall population within the federal prison system since (1) the program participants still are considered incarcerated even when they are at halfway houses or on home confinement and (2) non-program inmates also may be assigned to halfway houses and home confinement. However, placing inmates in these two latter stages does reduce the need for the minimum-security facilities to the extent the inmates would otherwise be assigned to them.

The potential for reducing costs and crowding through lower recidivism is unknown since the program is too new to determine its long-range effects. The men's camp has been in existence less than 2 years, and the women's camp just opened in July 1992. Of the 668 men who had entered the program through December 1992, only 77 had completed all three stages of the program and been released from BOP custody. The first class of women graduated from the Bryan camp in January 1993; thus no women have yet completed all three stages of the program.

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## **Policy Issues Concerning the Federal Boot Camp Program**

Because it is new and few participants have completed the entire program, it is too early to measure the effectiveness of the program. Although the program is already reaching more inmates than those targeted under 18 U.S.C. 4046, it remains so small relative to the overall federal inmate population, that it is likely to have little systemwide impact.

However, congressional interest in boot camps and other alternatives to traditional incarceration remains high as policymakers search for less costly alternatives to traditional imprisonment that do not increase the risk to public safety. In part, this interest reflects the rapidly rising costs of building and operating prisons for a federal prison population that has grown from 41,500 in 1986 to more than 70,000 in November 1992, with a projected population of 106,000 by 1996.

In 1992, Congress authorized federal grants to the states for the creation of up to 10 boot camps for juveniles;<sup>6</sup> President Clinton's campaign platform included support for expanding boot camps, and boot camps for first-time drug offenders have also been proposed. The federal boot camp program and its potential expansion pose several policy issues for the administration and Congress. Descriptions of these issues follow. The data available provide no clear support for one course of action over another.

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<sup>6</sup>Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Appropriations, Fiscal Years 1993, 1994, 1995, and 1996 Amendments of 1992 (P.L. 102-586, 106 Stat. 4982).

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**Issues Posed by Current  
Program Structure**

Two policy issues are posed by the current federal boot camp program structure. The first is whether BOP should exercise its authority to release Category A participants immediately following their graduation from the camp, as most states do. The second is whether both Category A and B boot camp graduates should be eligible for early release and extended home confinement.

Unlike most states, BOP does not release eligible boot camp participants following their graduation from the boot camp. Consequently, the federal program cannot achieve the per inmate cost savings that most state programs do. Since the per diem costs of federal and state boot camps exceed those of the average minimum-security prison, any immediate savings from boot camp programs is the result of shorter sentences and/or the time spent in halfway houses and home confinement, both of which are less expensive than minimum-security prisons. Any current savings in the federal program would be the result of the more extensive use of halfway houses and home confinement.

If BOP were to exercise its early release authority, additional savings in the federal program would be possible. Should the inmates be released to the supervision of the Federal Probation Service for all or part of their remaining sentence, the costs of that supervision would reduce the total savings to the federal government from early release.<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, the additional period of time that federal boot camp graduates spend in halfway houses and home detention provides BOP with the opportunity to help inmates build on the educational, vocational, and other skills they acquired in the camps. If the current approach results in a lower recidivism rate than state programs have achieved, this approach may prove to be more cost-effective than early releases in the long run.

Whether to provide BOP with the same options for both Category A and B boot camp graduates is a policy decision, and plausible reasons exist both for equalizing the treatment of the two categories of graduates and for continuing the current limitations on Category B graduates.

Category A and B participants enter the federal boot camp program under different statutory authorities. BOP has the authority to release Category A participants after they graduate from the boot camp and to place such participants in home confinement for whatever period of time it deems

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<sup>7</sup>Release from BOP custody to probation would lower BOP's cost but increase costs for the Federal Probation Service, which is part of the federal judiciary.

appropriate, but not to exceed the remainder of their sentence. However, BOP does not have the authority to place Category B participants in home confinement for longer than 6 months or 10 percent of their sentences (whichever is less). BOP may not release them before they have served their full sentence, less a maximum of 54 days a year for satisfactory behavior. Because BOP does not exercise its authority to release Category A participants after their graduation from the boot camp, in practice, the principal difference in the treatment of Category A and B boot camp graduates is the amount of time they may spend in home confinement.

Since both Category A and B participants are volunteers screened by BOP and selected as appropriate candidates for the boot camp program, some basis exists for treating both categories of boot camp graduates the same. If Congress were to grant BOP the same discretion over the post-boot-camp custody of all boot camp program participants, BOP would be allowed to make decisions that are cost-effective and tailored to the needs of individual participants. Some additional cost savings could accrue from BOP's ability to place Category B participants in home confinement for longer periods, even if BOP continues its policy of not releasing any participants early.

On the other hand, several reasons exist for continuing the current distinction between Category A and B boot camp graduates. First, Category B participants have been sentenced to as many as 60 months in prison, up to twice the maximum sentence allowed for Category A participants. BOP requires both sets of participants to be nonviolent offenders with minimal or no prior incarceration. However, Category B participants originally sentenced to more than 30 months generally have committed more serious offenses than their Category A counterparts.

Second, Category A and B participants enter the program by different routes and for arguably different purposes. Category A participants enter the boot camp soon after being sentenced—the program is how they serve that sentence, and section 4046 specifies a maximum eligible sentence of 30 months for such inmates. Category B participants, however, enter the program under BOP's general authority to determine the place of an inmate's confinement and to transfer the inmate from one institution to another.

These inmate volunteers have served as much as 36 months in prison before their placement in the boot camp. In effect, Category B participants enter the program as the first step in their transition from prison to the

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community. This is perhaps the most unusual feature of the federal boot camp program. It is too early to tell if this use of boot camps will be successful in reducing recidivism and thus long-term prison costs.

BOP has decided to maintain Category B participants in the program and has been considering the administrative expansion of eligibility criteria for Category B participants. BOP officials said that the Category B participants are often some of the better participants, since they already have served part of their sentence in traditional imprisonment and have a basis for comparison with the boot camp program.

Category A participants now comprise about 90 percent of all those entering the boot camp program. Assuming this trend continues, the different treatment of Category A and B participants is likely to affect few Category B participants unless current boot camp capacity is expanded.

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**Issues Posed by Possible**  
**Program Expansion**

BOP is satisfied with the way the program has worked to date, and the program does offer potential cost savings over traditional incarceration in minimum-security facilities. However, the program as currently structured is too small to have a major impact on federal prison crowding and costs. Although BOP administratively expanded eligibility by the addition of Category B participants, in July 1992 only slightly more than 2 percent (about 1,400) of the federal prison population was eligible for the program. Moreover, with so few participants (77) having completed all three stages of the program, its impact on recidivism, and thus long-term costs, is also uncertain.

In addition to releasing participants following their graduation from the boot camp, expanding eligibility, and thus the pool of potential volunteers, would also affect potential short-term cost savings. One way to expand participation would be for BOP to expand eligibility administratively by easing its current requirements on age, security level, and incarceration history as well as increasing the maximum 60-month sentence for Category B volunteers. Another way of expanding participation, which would require congressional action, would be to increase the statutory maximum sentence of 30 months for those inmates now qualifying as Category A participants.

Administratively, expanding the maximum 60-month sentence for Category B participants increases the pool of inmates who can volunteer for the boot camps as the first step in completing the final 24 months of

their sentence. Like most state programs, the federal program is primarily designed for nonviolent offenders with minimal criminal history (including minimal or no prior incarceration). Increasing the maximum eligible sentence would mean including inmates who have committed more serious offenses.

Any discussion of statutorily expanding the federal boot camp program would need to include consideration of the expansion's impact on the sentencing policies embodied in the federal sentencing guidelines and statutes mandating tougher sentences for certain nonviolent drug and white-collar offenses. Policy choices would include what offenses, if any, should be excluded from eligibility, and whether all inmates who successfully complete the boot camp regimen should be eligible for early release and extended home confinement; or distinctions should be made, based on such things as the type of offense or length of sentence.

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## Conclusions

The federal boot camp program is fairly new and as structured, not likely to have a significant impact in reducing prison crowding or costs, even if BOP uses its early release authority for Category A inmates. In part, this is because the program is so small. Only two camps are in operation, and these are capable of accommodating 312 inmates, or less than 0.5 percent of the federal inmate population. Moreover, as of July 1992, only 2.1 percent of the federal population qualified for the program, even though BOP expanded program eligibility under its general authority to choose the type and location of an inmate's incarceration.

BOP could reduce costs if it had the same early release and extended home confinement authority for Category B boot camp graduates that it has for Category A graduates. Even if BOP continues its policy of releasing no program participants early, extending the period that Category B participants may be placed in home confinement would save money, since the cost is about half that of the halfway houses to which they would otherwise be confined. However, actual future savings may be small even with this change. According to BOP, Category A inmates now comprise about 90 percent of those entering the boot camp program. Assuming this trend continues, the future number of Category B participants is likely to be quite small unless current boot camp capacity is expanded.

BOP is generally pleased with the program thus far but admits that its long-term impact on reducing prison costs and crowding is uncertain at this point. Available data from state and federal programs provide no

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reason, other than the potential short-term cost savings, for expanding the federal boot camp program. Moreover, since available state recidivism data suggest that boot camp participants may not have a much lower recidivism rate than those who are sent to traditional prisons, the long-term effect of boot camps on reducing prison crowding and costs is uncertain.

Boot camp programs save money and reduce prison crowding in the short term, because inmates serve shorter sentences and/or spend longer periods of time in less expensive forms of confinement, such as halfway houses and home confinement. Additional short-term savings could be achieved by enlarging the pool of eligible participants by expanding the length of sentence that qualifies inmates for the program, providing less restrictive standards for age and security level than those BOP uses, reducing the length of stay by mandating early release for participants, or using some combination of these changes. The extent of the potential savings depends on the changes made. Increasing program participation would require trade-offs with other current policies such as the expansion's impact on the sentencing policies embodied in the federal sentencing guidelines and statutes mandating tougher sentences for certain nonviolent drug and white-collar offenders.

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## Agency Comments

BOP provided oral comments on chapter 4 of the report, which discusses the federal boot camp program. BOP officials, including those in the Community Corrections and Detention Division, said that they found the chapter to be a fair and balanced discussion of the federal boot camp program.

Regarding its authority to release inmates early under 18 U.S.C. 4046, BOP acknowledges that section 4046(c) may be interpreted as providing BOP with the authority to release Category A participants early. However, BOP has advised us that it has no official position on this issue and has not ruled out other possible interpretations of the statute. As a matter of policy, BOP does not release Category A participants early and has no plans to revise this policy.

As discussed earlier, we believe that by its terms 18 U.S.C. 4046(c) authorizes BOP to release eligible participants before their terms would otherwise expire, and the legislative history of the statute confirms that Congress intended to grant BOP early release authority. While BOP suggests

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that other interpretations of the statute might be possible, it has not provided us with an explanation of these other interpretations.





# List of Contacts for State Boot Camp Programs

The following is a list of people we contacted to obtain background information concerning boot camp programs. We are providing the names and addresses for anyone interested in obtaining information about these state programs.

**Table I.1: List of Contacts for State Boot Camp Programs**

State	Agency/address	Contact person	Telephone number
Alabama	Department of Corrections Community Work Center P.O. Box 368 Childersburg, AL 35044	John Winston	(205) 378-3821
Arizona	Department of Corrections ASPC-F East Unit Shock Incarceration P.O. Box 629 Florence, AZ 85232	Blaire Marshall	(602) 868-4011
Arkansas	Department of Corrections Boot Camp P.O. Box 1010 Wrightsville, AR 72183	Major Tommy Rochelle	(501) 897-5806
Colorado	Department of Corrections P.O. Box 2017 Buena Vista, CO 81211	Major Mike Perry	(719) 395-2404
Florida	Department of Corrections Youthful Offender Office 2601 Blairstone Road Tallahassee, FL 32399	Clint Cox	(904) 488-1140
Georgia	Department of Corrections 2 Martin Luther King Drive Suite 670 Atlanta, GA 30334	Tommy Payne	(404) 651-7875
Idaho	Department of Corrections Star Route # 3 Box 147 Cottonwood, ID 83522	Dean E. Allen	(208) 962-3276
Illinois	Department of Corrections 1301 Concordia Ct. P.O. Box 19277 Springfield, IL 62794	Robert J. Jones	(217) 522-2666
Kansas	Department of Corrections Landon State Office Building 900 SW Jackson Topeka, KS 66612	Terry Reiling	(913) 296-3317
Louisiana	Department of Public Safety 654 Main Street P.O. Box 94394 Baton Rouge, LA 70804	Jean Wall	(504) 342-6740

(continued)

**Appendix I  
List of Contacts for State Boot Camp  
Programs**

<b>State</b>	<b>Agency/address</b>	<b>Contact person</b>	<b>Telephone number</b>
Maryland	Division of Corrections P.O. Box 1425 Jessup, MD 20794	Stanley Christian	(301) 799-1363
Michigan	Department of Corrections Grandview Plaza P.O. Box 30003 Lansing, MI 489092	Donald J. Hengesh	(517) 373-0287
Mississippi	Department of Corrections Regimented Inmate Discipline P.O. Box 847 Parchman, MS 38738	Bob Rowe	(601) 745-3037
Nevada	Department of Prisons P.O. Box 208 Indian Springs, NV 89070	Lt. Pete Seagriff	(702) 879-3046
New Hampshire	Department of Corrections 105 Pleasant Street Main Building P.O. Box 769 Concord, NH 033302	John Sanfilippo	(603) 524-9039
New York	Department of Corrections Building 2 Harriman State Office Campus Albany, NY 12226	Cheryl Clark	(518) 457-8144
North Carolina	Department of Corrections IMPACT Youth Center P.O. Box 211 Hoffman, NC 28347	Major John Taylor	(919) 281-5156
Ohio	Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections Camp REAMS 5900 B.I.S. Road Lancaster, OH 43130	Major Ralph Coyle	(614) 653-4324
Oklahoma	Department of Corrections 3400 Martin Luther King Avenue P.O. Box 11400 Oklahoma City, OK 73136	George Lindley	(405) 425-2500
Pennsylvania	Department of Corrections Quehanna Boot Camp H.C. Box 32 Karthaus, PA 16845	John Wertz	(814) 765-0644
South Carolina	Department of Corrections P.O. Box 21787 Columbia, SC 29221	Karen C. Martin	(803) 737-8832
Tennessee	Department of Corrections Wayne County Boot Camp P.O. Box 182 Clifton, TN 37716	James M. Davis	(615) 676-3345

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**Appendix I  
List of Contacts for State Boot Camp  
Programs**

<b>State</b>	<b>Agency/address</b>	<b>Contact person</b>	<b>Telephone number</b>
Texas	Department of Corrections P.O. Box 99 Huntsville, TX 77340	Captain John Pitzeruse	(409) 295-6331
Virginia	Department of Corrections P.O. Box 26963 Richmond, VA 23261	Andrew Molloy	(804) 674-3000
Wisconsin	Division of Corrections Saint Croix Correctional Center P.O. Box 36 New Richmond, WI 54017	Peter Stacy	(715) 246-6971
Wyoming	Division of Corrections 40 Pippin Road Newcastle, WY 82701	Captain R. Munoz	(307) 746-4436

# Additional Details on Questionnaire Methodology

Because no national database on boot camps existed at the time of our review, we developed our own. The primary method by which we accomplished this was through the use of two questionnaires—an administration and a camp questionnaire.

After identifying existing boot camp programs through a telephone survey of all 50 states and the District of Columbia, we developed the administration questionnaire and mailed a copy to the senior state officials overseeing the 26 state programs. The administration questionnaire gathered information on programwide objectives and methods, participant eligibility and outcomes, staffing, and costs.

We also developed and sent a camp questionnaire to the states to be completed for each of their camps. This questionnaire asked for details of the inmates and program activities at each camp and were to be completed by the individual designated by the state as in the best position to provide a response. These individuals included camp commanders, program officials, and other senior corrections officials. While in New York and Georgia, we administered the questionnaires during our site work in those two states rather than mailing them.

When the responses from any state were incomplete, we made follow-up inquiries by phone. For none of the states did we verify or validate the information provided on the questionnaires, except that we did ask for supporting records on costs, recidivism, and crowding to the extent they were available in Georgia, Oklahoma, and New York—the three states we visited.

By the end of our field work in November 1992, we had received responses from all 26 states on the administration questionnaires and from 53 of the 57 camps on the camp questionnaires. State officials for the other four camps chose not to respond for various reasons, including the recency with which the camps had opened, the lack of information available, and the fact that some camps shared facilities.

Despite the high response rate to our questionnaires, we found it difficult to generalize about the nature of boot camp programs as a whole. The programs and camps vary widely in size, age, and focus, and information is maintained in different formats among the states. In addition, the states sometimes had specific exceptions to general requirements, and some states had more than one program or component. Therefore, the data are most useful for providing a descriptive profile of the programs.

# General Statistics on State Prison Boot Camps

State	Year started	Number of camps	Capacity		Total (in days)	Length of program (in days)
			Men	Women		
Alabama	1988	1	180	0	180	90
Arizona	1988	1	126	24	150	120
Arkansas	1990	1	150	0	150	105
Colorado	1991	1	92	8	100	90
Florida	1987	1	100	0	100	90
Georgia	1983	19	2,623	150	2,773	30 to 240
Idaho	1989	1	210	0	210	100
Illinois	1990	1	220	10	230	120
Kansas	1991	1	96	8	104	180
Louisiana	1987	1	136	2	138	90 to 180
Maryland	1990	1	436	12	448	168
Michigan	1988	3	600	0	600	90
Mississippi	1985	2	233	30	263	120
Nevada	1991	1	80	0	80	150
New Hampshire	1990	1	60	12	72	120
New York	1987	5	1,350	150	1,500	180
North Carolina	1989	1	90	0	90	90
Ohio	1991	1	100	0	100	90
Oklahoma	1984	4	346	100	446	45 to 180
Pennsylvania	1992	1	190	10	200	180
South Carolina	1986	2	196	24	220	90
Tennessee	1989	1	150	0	150	90
Texas	1989	3	400	12	412	90
Virginia	1991	1	100	0	100	88 to 90
Wisconsin	1991	1	40	0	40	180
Wyoming	1990	1	24	0	24	90
<b>Total</b>		<b>57</b>	<b>8,328</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>8,880</b>	

Source: GAO administrative questionnaires.

# Legal Authority for State Prison Boot Camps

State	Specific statute	General statute	Executive decision	Agency authority	Other
Alabama	x				
Arizona	x				
Arkansas	x	x			
Colorado	x				
Florida	x				
Georgia	x		x		
Idaho		x		x	
Illinois	x				
Kansas	x				
Louisiana	x				
Maryland			x	x	x
Michigan	x	x			
Mississippi		x			
Nevada	x				
New Hampshire	x				
New York	x				
North Carolina		x			
Ohio					x
Oklahoma	x			x	
Pennsylvania	x				
South Carolina	x				
Tennessee	x				
Texas	x				
Virginia	x				
Wisconsin	x				
Wyoming	x				
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>

Source: GAO administrative questionnaires.

# Stages of Corrections That Boot Camps Were Designed to Supplement or Replace

State	Prison	Jail	Parole	Probation	Other
Alabama	x			x	
Arizona	x			x	
Arkansas	x				x
Colorado	x				
Florida	x				
Georgia	x			x	
Idaho	x			x	
Illinois	x				
Kansas	x			x	
Louisiana	x		x		
Maryland	x		x		
Michigan	x				
Mississippi	x			x	
Nevada				x	
New Hampshire	x				
New York	x				
North Carolina	x	x	x	x	
Ohio					x
Oklahoma	x				x
Pennsylvania	x				
South Carolina	x				
Tennessee	x				
Texas					x
Virginia	x	x		x	
Wisconsin	x				
Wyoming	x				
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>

Source: GAO administrative questionnaires.



# Eligibility Requirements for State Prison Boot Camps

State	Sentence authority	Age range	Previous adult offense	Excluded offenses	Sentence faced (yrs)	Impairments		Voluntary	
						Physical	Mental	In	Out
Alabama	Judge	No age limit	No	Murder, rape, kidnapping, sodomy, arson, robbery, crimes against children, and life without parole	1-15	Yes	No	No	Yes
Arizona	Judge and corrections authorities	18-25	No	Murder and violent crimes	1-7	No	No	Yes	No
Arkansas	Corrections authorities	No age limit	No	Murder, rape, robbery, riot offenses, and any other felony	6 mos-10 yrs	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Colorado	Corrections authorities	18-25	Yes	All violent crimes	No limit	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Florida	Judge and corrections authorities	15-24	Yes	Capital and life felonies, minimum mandatory sentences, and any type of sex offense	1-10	No	No	No	No
Georgia	Judge, corrections authorities, and parole authorities	17-30*	Yes	Violent and sex offenses	1-10	No	No	Yes/No	Yes/No
Idaho	Judge and corrections authorities	Lower limit 15-no upper limit	Yes	Murder I and II	1-life	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Illinois	Judge and corrections authorities	17-29	Yes	Class X felonies, murder, armed violence, kidnapping (i.e., sexual assault/abuse and forcible detention)	1-5	No	No	Yes	Yes
Kansas	Judge and corrections authorities	18-25	Yes	Crimes against persons	1-3	No	No	Yes	No
Louisiana	Judge, corrections authorities, and probation/parole	17-39	Yes	Sex offenses and crimes that do not allow parole (e.g., armed robbery)	1.5-7	No	No	Yes	Yes
Maryland	Corrections authorities, and probation/parole authorities	No lower limit-31 upper limit	Yes	Violent crimes	9 mos-8 yrs	No	No	Yes	Yes
Michigan	Judge	No lower limit-25 upper limit	Yes	Rape, arson, and offenses that do not allow probation as a sentence	1-no limit	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

(continued)

**Appendix VI  
Eligibility Requirements for State Prison  
Boot Camps**

State	Sentence authority	Age range	Previous adult offense	Excluded offenses	Sentence faced (yrs)	Impairments		Voluntary	
						Physical	Mental	In	Out
Mississippi	Judge and corrections authorities	No age limit	Yes	Crimes involving use of a deadly weapon, mandatory life or death sentences, and prior confinement in an adult penal institution	All except life and death	No	No	No	Yes
Nevada	Judge	Lower limit 18-with no upper limit	Yes	Violent crimes	1-no limit	No	No	No	No
New Hampshire	Judge, corrections authorities and probation/parole authorities	18-30	Yes	Violent crimes	2-4	No	No	Yes	Yes
New York	Corrections authorities	16-35	Yes	Manslaughter, homicide, and other violent felony crimes, rape, sodomy, sexual abuse, and escapes	1-3	No	No	Yes	Yes
North Carolina	Judge	16-26	Yes	No crimes	No limit	No	No	Yes	Yes
Ohio	Corrections authorities	18-25	No	Violent felony crimes, sex offenses	1-5	No	No	Yes	Yes
Oklahoma	Judge and corrections authorities	18-22 <sup>b</sup>	Yes	Violent crimes, more than two previous incarcerations	No limit to 5 yrs	Yes	Yes	No	No
Pennsylvania	Judge and corrections authorities	18-35	No	Murder, kidnapping, rape, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, and robbery	2.5-5	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
South Carolina	Judge and corrections authorities	17-25	Yes	Murder, armed robbery, kidnapping, criminal sexual conduct assault, battery with intent to kill, burglary, and manslaughter	3 mos-8 yrs	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Tennessee	Judge and corrections authorities	18-30	Yes	Sex offenses, child abuse, illegal distribution of controlled substances to minors, bodily injury to victim or bystanders	1-6	No	No	No	No
Texas	Judge	17-25	No	Prior incarceration in a penitentiary for a felony conviction	1-10	No	No	No	No

(continued)

**Appendix VI  
Eligibility Requirements for State Prison  
Boot Camps**

State	Sentence authority	Age range	Previous adult offense	Excluded offenses	Sentence faced (yrs)	Impairments		Voluntary	
						Physical	Mental	In	Out
Virginia	Judge	18-24	Yes	Murder, manslaughter, kidnapping, sexual assault, rape, robbery, and malicious wounding	0-20	No	No	Yes	Yes
Wisconsin	Corrections authorities	18-30	Yes	Sexual assaults and weapon offenses	No limit	No	No	Yes	Yes
Wyoming	Judge and corrections authorities	17-25	No	Violent crimes against persons	2-4	No	No	Yes	Yes

\*The Intensive Discipline Units do not have age requirements.

†The age limit applies to the Regimented Discipline Program. The other three programs described in appendix VII do not have an age limit.

Source: GAO administrative questionnaires.

# Prison Boot Camp Programs in Georgia, New York, and Oklahoma

To obtain more detailed information on how prison boot camps were organized and operated in individual states, we visited programs in Georgia, New York, and Oklahoma. These three programs are among the oldest and largest in terms of capacity in the country. Moreover, while they are alike in many ways, there are important differences in the way they have evolved. The following provides a brief description of the programs as they were operating at the time of our visits between February and March 1992.

## Georgia

Georgia began its Special Alternative Incarceration (SAI) program in November 1983. It was a two-part program consisting of a rigorous 90-day tour in a prison boot camp followed by a less structured period of community supervision. The program was designed as an alternative to prison, and participation was mandated by the sentencing judge as a condition of probation.

Eligibility in SAI was limited to individuals who were between the ages of 17 and 25 and whose crimes would have made them eligible for a sentence of 1 to 5 years (until 1987, when the sentence limitation was removed). Moreover, these individuals could not have been incarcerated before as adults and must have been free of physical and mental health problems.

The boot camp portion of SAI was intended to routinize the principles of discipline through hard manual labor, strenuous physical conditioning, and military-style drills and ceremony. After release from the camps, the graduates went into periods of community supervision. In most cases, this was regular probation but could include court-ordered placement in a diversion center, similar to a federal halfway house, or intensive probation supervision.

SAI lasted until the end of 1990. During its more than 7 years of existence, judges in 45 Georgia circuits sentenced 4,743 offenders to the state's 2 boot camps.

Georgia began its Comprehensive Correctional Boot Camp Program in 1991. While still following the military-style model of SAI, the new program offered much more. Generally, it was to have the following five key components:

- Probation Detention Centers (PDC). These centers use a highly structured military regimen but are not as physically demanding as the boot camps.

Thus, judges have the option of sentencing offenders who are low-risk but whose poor health would make them ineligible for the boot camps to the PDC. The length of stay ranges from 60 to 240 days. One PDC is for women, the only such facility in Georgia's boot camp program.

- SAI/Probation Boot Camp. These camps for first-time adult offenders are similar to the original SAI program and are a condition to probation established by a judge. The length of stay is 90 days. Offenders who successfully complete this program are released to community supervision. Offenders who fail may have their probation revoked and be sentenced to prison.
- Inmate Boot Camps. The Board of Pardons and Paroles selects inmates during the diagnostic process for this program, which is structured along the same lines as the probation camps with an emphasis on discipline and work. The length of stay is 90 days. To qualify, an inmate must be 30 years old or less, sentenced to 10 years or less, and convicted of a nonviolent offense if the sentence is more than 2 years.
- Intensive Discipline Unit. This unique pilot program allows inmates who have been assigned to disciplinary isolation to work their way back into the general prison population by going through an intensive discipline program. The length of stay ranges from 30 to 90 days.
- Follow-up. After release from the first three components listed earlier, an offender will be under continuing supervision in the community. To the extent resources are available, he or she will have a minimum of 3 months of highly structured supervision on probation or parole, followed by a period of regular supervision.

As of May 1992, Georgia was operating 12 PDCs, 3 probation camps, 2 inmate camps, and 2 intensive discipline units. At maximum capacity, the Comprehensive Correctional Boot Camp program will accommodate 14,592 inmates a year. In addition, it will handle a sizeable portion of a statewide prison population that currently totals about 23,000.

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## New York

New York's boot camp (shock incarceration) program began in July 1987. It is a rigorous, multitreatment program that emphasizes discipline, work, substance abuse treatment, and education—all within a military-style environment. Although the New York program is similar to other boot camp programs nationwide, it is much larger, requires a longer period of incarceration, and places a greater emphasis on treatment for substance abusers than most programs.

The program has two major phases. During the first phase, participants are incarcerated in a boot camp for 180 days. During the second phase, these same participants are subject to a period of intense community supervision.

Participants are selected for the boot camps by the Department of Correctional Services during a screening upon entering the prison system. To be eligible, an inmate (1) must be between the ages of 16 and 35; (2) must not have been convicted of a violent felony, manslaughter in the second degree, certain sex crimes, or escape or absconding offenses; (3) must be eligible for parole within 3 years; (4) must not have previously been convicted of a felony subject to an indeterminate sentence; and (5) must volunteer. These eligibility requirements are established by law and have been amended on occasion since the program began.

New York has five boot camps. Four are for men only, while one accommodates both men and women. The overall capacity of the camps is 1,500 inmates at any one time. The New York camps have the traditional boot camp emphasis on drills, discipline, and work. However, the program is based on a therapeutic community model that uses living/learning units within the corrections facilities supervised and operated by specially trained staff. The overall aim is to reintegrate the individual into society with an emphasis on counseling for alcohol and substance abuse. The state estimates that for every 500 hours of physical training, drill, and ceremony, there are also 546 hours of the therapeutic approach to treating addiction, 260 hours of mandatory education, and 650 hours of hard labor.

New York officials believe that follow-up is necessary for the behavior modification taught in the camps. The officials also believe that close supervision at this point is a way to create a smooth transition from the boot camp to the community and to overcome the problems often encountered by the participant's not having a suitable home environment to go to upon release. The state offers a community-based residential program to provide temporary housing and support services for up to 90 days for individuals in need of a structured environment.

After graduation from the camps, participants are placed in intensive shock supervision, under the authority of the Division of Parole. Among other things, this supervision includes enrollment in an academic or vocational program within 2 weeks after release, substance abuse counseling, attendance at community network programs, curfew checks,

and random urinalysis testing. In addition, the participants are expected to work and receive assistance in obtaining employment.

## Oklahoma

Oklahoma actually has 4 separate boot camp programs within the state, with an overall capacity of 446 inmates. These are the Regimented Inmate Discipline (RID) program for men, the Female Offender Regimented Treatment (FORT) program for women, a shock incarceration program for men and one for women. Although the four programs share certain common features, they also have major differences in program focus and eligibility.

The RID program, which began in 1984, is second only to Georgia's SAI in longevity among the modern camps. With a capacity for 150 inmates, it was established by statute and is for men aged 18 to 25 who have committed nonviolent offenses. RID is a program of intensive drills, work, and study. It is an open-entry, open-exit, self-paced program. Participants enter the program at all times, so there really is no "class" with which a participant graduates, as is the case in the military or in other states' boot camps.

Inmates are sentenced to RID by a judge. Although the program can last up to 6 months, the participant typically comes up for review after 120 days. If a participant has responded well, the judge then can judicially review the sentence originally handed down and revise it. In most cases, a participant who successfully completes RID will be released to probation. A participant who does not successfully complete RID will be returned to the general inmate population to serve his original sentence.

The FORT program began in 1991 with the assistance of a grant from BJA. It has a capacity for 60 inmates and is located at the Eddie Warrior Correctional Institution, which it shares with a shock incarceration group and a general population group—all of the participants are women. FORT is almost totally aimed at offenders incarcerated for drug charges and is heavy on treatment. About half of each day is spent in educational classes, and half is spent in treatment and counseling. In addition, considerable drilling and exercise exist, but unlike RID no work details exist.

Like RID, FORT is an open-entry, open-exit, self-paced program, and its participants are committed by a judge as a part of a 120-day judicial review, delayed sentencing, or regular sentencing. After completing the program, which can range from 4 to 6 months, they are eligible for parole

consideration. If they are approved, they could be released to general parole; if they are not, they will go into the general prison population. Unlike RID, there is no age restriction for FORT.

The two shock incarceration camps, which began in late 1991, are essentially alike, except that one is for men and one is for women. There is no age restriction. They differ from the other boot camp programs in that the participants are selected by correctional officials for participation at the screening/induction center. The program lasts 45 days, during which the participants engage in intensive work and drills. No education or treatment is included. At the end of the program, participants are reviewed by the parole board and either released on parole or returned to the general prison population.

A unique aspect of the boot camps is that while they are operated by the Department of Corrections, they were organized under the authority of the state parole board. In March 1992, the men's program had a capacity of 196 inmates, while the women's program had a capacity of 40.

The amount of time an inmate actually spends in prison and the level of supervision upon release can vary widely in Oklahoma. First, Oklahoma has a law that can allow a judge to delay sentencing in some cases for up to 120 days. Another law allows a judge to review—and possibly adjust—the sentence of an inmate 120 days after sentencing.

In addition, Oklahoma has a unique parole system. Offenders come up for parole very early in their sentence. However, each case must be reviewed separately by an unpaid and volunteer parole board, and all paroles must be approved by the governor himself. In addition, Oklahoma has a program known as Pre-Parole Conditional Supervision, in which inmates are allowed to go home under what amounts to a house arrest. Largely, this option was required because of the burgeoning inmate population and the fact that Oklahoma does not have the resources to build new prisons.



# Success of State Boot Camp Programs as Seen by State Administrators

Objectives	Extent to which objectives have been achieved				
	Very great	Great	Moderate	Some	Little or no
Improving self-esteem	14	11	<sup>a</sup>	<sup>a</sup>	<sup>a</sup>
Need for alternative to traditional incarceration	11	12	<sup>a</sup>	2	<sup>a</sup>
Drug treatment and education	6	11	5	2	<sup>a</sup>
Reducing costs	7	9	4	2	1
Rehabilitation	5	11	5	1	<sup>a</sup>
Reducing recidivism	5	7	8	1	<sup>a</sup>
Addressing public dissatisfaction	7	9	1	2	1
Protecting public	5	9	3	2	<sup>a</sup>
Reducing crowding	4	7	2	8	2
Punishment	2	6	7	4	2
Addressing court pressures	3	7	5	<sup>a</sup>	1
Vocational training	4	4	4	3	3
Deterring crime	2	5	5	4	2
Deterring specific offenders	2	4	7	2	3

<sup>a</sup>No response in this category.

Source: GAO administrative questionnaires.

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