

State of Iowa Department of Corrections

Policy and Procedures

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Applicability: Institutions, CBC, Central Office, IPI

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1: ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT Sub

Chapter: INFORMATION SYSTEMS/RESEARCH

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Subject: RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

PREA Standards: N/A

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Authority:

1. PURPOSE

To describe the manner in which research activities shall be regulated in the Iowa Department of Corrections (IDOC) institutions and districts.

2. POLICY

It is the policy of the IDOC to permit research activities when such activities are conducted according to generally recognized professional standards and have a reasonable prospect of advancing the state of professional knowledge of corrections or specific management practices.

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3. DEFINITIONS – As used in this document.

- A. External Research - Research requested or initiated by individuals, research firms, or other agencies who are not employees of the IDOC and which may be funded by public or private sources.
- B. Institutional Review Board (IRB) - A panel established by research organizations, such as universities, to provide human subjects review of research proposals. Human subjects review ensures that research proposals meet commonly accepted standards of research ethics, and identifies possible areas where research proposals could cause harm to persons.
- C. Research Activities - A project, paper, or study designed primarily to produce new data, information and/or understanding of corrections, criminal justice, management or other issues of relevance to the IDOC. The use of interviews, questionnaires, reviews of case records, and data extractions from automated information systems (existing IDOC datasets) may supplement such research. Research does not include any study that will expose research subjects to the possibility of physical, psychological, or other harm as a consequence of their participation in the study.
- D. Research Director - The individual appointed by the Director to oversee implementation of this policy.

4. PROCEDURES

A. Research Guidelines

- 1. The IDOC supports and conducts research activities in its institutions and community corrections districts when that research is relevant to its programs, services and operations, or those of corrections as a whole, and when the research is ethical, methodically sound, and feasible. The use of incarcerated individuals/clients for medical, pharmaceutical, or cosmetic experiments is prohibited.

2. The Director will appoint an individual at the Central Office who shall serve as the IDOC's research director.
3. Individual Wardens and District Directors may commission and cooperate in research projects with notification to the Director.
4. The IDOC may engage in research activities that assist in establishing future agency goals, objectives and plans, and that contribute to more effective and efficient institutional and community-based corrections operations.
5. The Director, Wardens, District Directors and agency researchers should regularly discuss opportunities for research projects, as well as specific research and evaluation needs of the IDOC, with institutions of higher learning and other outside professionals.
6. External research activities that may be considered for approval in the IDOC must use generally recognized research methodology, must not expose research subjects to the possibility of physical, psychological or other harm as a consequence of their participation in the study, and must have a reasonable prospect of advancing the state of professional knowledge in a recognized correctional subject area.

B. Steps for Approving Research

The following general structure shall apply to all external research requests received by the IDOC and to IDOC employee proposals for independent research:

1. Proposals for research projects must be submitted in writing to the research director.
2. The written proposal should include the following elements:
 - a. Title of the proposed study.
 - b. A summary of the goals of the study and the justification for the research.

- c. Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the principal researcher and all research staff.
- d. An endorsement by a recognized research organization such as a university, college, private foundation, consulting firm, or public department that has a mandate to perform research, certifying that the research proposal is for valid scientific, educational or other public purposes. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval or description of status of IRB process will fulfill this requirement. Internal research may waive IRB approval if research involves no more than minimal risk, utilizes preexisting data, is not supported by federal funding, and is recognized by the Department of Corrections Director as a priority of the Department.
- e. Information on whether the research findings are to be published and if so, where.
- f. Information that will assist in estimating the level of disruption to operations, and the availability of staff and other agency resources required to support the research. If incarcerated individual/client interviews are to be conducted, a summary of the total number of incarcerated individuals/clients to be interviewed, how long each interview will take, and the total number of interviewers will be submitted.
- g. Sampling procedures for selecting incarcerated individual/client subjects or incarcerated individual/client records for the research, as well as criteria that will be used for the sample selection.
- h. Procedures for data collection and copies of research instruments to be used, including interview guides, questionnaires, data collection forms, and tests. If the data are to be extracted from automated information systems, a list of requested data items will be submitted.
- i. Confidentiality and security procedures to be followed to protect the privacy of participants, which shall comport with IDOC policy on incarcerated individual/client privacy rights.

3. IDOC staff may assist in carrying out research with the approval of the Director, Warden, or District Director.
4. The research director shall review each proposal received and recommend to the Director whether or not the research should be approved.
5. All research proposals shall be answered within 30 days. Approvals shall outline any conditions of approval; denials shall include the reasons.

C. Additional Requirements

1. Where applicable, persons conducting research shall be informed of, and agree in writing to conform to, statutes and policies governing the confidentiality of information, and any other relevant policies by signing **AD-IS-04 F-1, *Data Use and Non-Disclosure Agreement***.
2. In any report of results, researchers shall not use the names of subjects or describe any incarcerated individual/client in such detail that he/she might be identified.
3. Research data of a confidential nature shall be kept confidential by researchers and all staff assisting in the research. Written documents, records and other information of a confidential nature shall be kept in locked files in a secure area, and care shall be taken to ensure computer files containing confidential information are inaccessible to other than the persons conducting or assisting in the research.
4. The accuracy of all research data collected may be reviewed and verified by the IDOC prior to publication of research findings.
5. Incarcerated individual/client participation in non-medical, non-pharmaceutical, and non-cosmetic research will be voluntary. Informed consent shall be obtained by researchers prior to administering surveys, questionnaires, assessments, or conducting interviews with incarcerated individuals/client.
6. Research conducted shall comply with any applicable state and federal guidelines for the use and dissemination of research findings and with accepted professional and scientific ethics.

D. Research Reporting Requirements

1. Where requested, the principal researcher shall prepare a brief summary report that includes the tentative findings, and send a copy to the research director/Warden and/or District Director.
2. When the entire project is completed and prior to its release, the principal researcher shall send a copy of the final research report to the research director/Warden and/or District Director.
3. The Warden or District Director shall forward a copy of all final research reports conducted in their institution or community corrections district to the research director.

E. Violations of Research Regulations

1. Permission to conduct the current study and any further research may be withdrawn for violation of this policy, or of other IDOC statutes or policies, in the course of the research.
2. Violations of the regulations with regard to criminal incarcerated individual/client record information may subject the violator to civil or criminal liability.

F. Employee Research and Employment-Related Publications

1. Research conducted by employees of the IDOC as part of their assigned tasks shall follow generally recognized professional standards.
2. Employees of the IDOC wishing to conduct independent research shall submit a written proposal using the instructions for submission of external research proposals prior to the beginning of the project.
3. Research activities conducted by employees under this section are subject to the same requirements as external research.
4. Employees wishing to publish original material that includes information gained through employment with the IDOC shall submit to the Warden or

District Director, and the research director, prior to beginning the project, a written request that provides the following information:

- a. Purpose of the project.
 - b. Planned contents of the material.
 - c. Detailed outline of the project and proposed release forms if the proposal involves disclosure of information about specific incarcerated individuals/clients or staff.
 - d. Identification of any proposed publisher(s) or others who may receive the material or who might release the contents of the material.
 - e. Proposed release date of the material, if known.
5. Written approval must be obtained from the Warden or District Director, and the research director, prior to submission of the materials to publishers or others who might release the contents when that material is specific to IDOC operations.
 6. A copy of all approved material shall be retained in the IDOC Central Office by the research director.
 7. Contents envisioned under this section includes operations, activities, or practices of the IDOC or its staff; identifiable incarcerated individuals/clients or records; and any other documents, records, information, etc. gathered or maintained by the IDOC or any other related agency.

G. Other Considerations

1. Normally incarcerated individuals/clients shall not receive compensation, remunerations, or payment of any kind in connection with a research study. However, if the evaluator/researcher provides a reason that remuneration should be given, the research director shall review the proposal to determine appropriateness and make a recommendation to the Director. If approved, the criteria and format for payment will be determined.

2. No IDOC employee will receive compensation, remunerations, or payment of any kind for participation or assistance in a research project, other than their normal salary.
3. Unless otherwise approved prior to the commencement of the project, access to research data collected will be limited to the researchers, staff members charged with filing or evaluating the data, the Warden or District Director, and IDOC Central Office staff.