

Massachusetts Department of Correction Correctional Industries Program Participation and Recidivism

An Analysis on Inmates Released in 2016

April 2022



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Table of Contents

Acknowledgmentsi
Table of Contentsii
Executive Summary1
Key Findings1
Introduction1
Methodology3
Program Participants, Hours worked and Payment Received
Program Participants and Associated Disciplinary Reports7
Program Participants and Associated Recidivism10
Program Participants vs. Non-Participants12
Summary15
Works Cited 16
Appendix

Executive Summary

The purpose of this study was to discuss Massachusetts Department of Correction (MADOC) inmates' participation in Correctional Industries (CI), focusing on the areas of program participation and hours worked, compensation, employment, and disciplinary reports. Recidivism rates¹, based on a three-year follow-up of MADOC inmates released during 2016 who participated in CI, are analyzed to see if reductions in recidivism were observed. ² Regression analysis was performed to identify differences between the participants and non-participants based on key demographics.

Key Findings

- The inmates who participated in the programs for less than six months had the highest recidivism rate of 37%, which was reduced to 20% among inmates whose involvement in the programs ranged from six months to less than a year, and further reduced to 17% among inmates who stayed with the programs for one or more years.
- Working in the CI programs for two or more years is associated with the reduced number of disciplinary reports (D-reports).
- Inmates who worked for two or more years made an average of \$4,326. In contrast, inmates involved with the programs for less than six months made only \$161.
- Given the association found between participation in the CI programs and the lower number of D-reports and the lower rate of recidivism, CI appeared to have a positive influence on the lives of program participants if they stayed with the programs for at least six months, and especially for two or more years

Introduction

Inmates returning to the community after a period of incarceration typically face several difficult challenges upon release. Securing employment is one of the most important and difficult tasks for a formerly incarcerated person to achieve (James, 2015). By obtaining a job that provides a living wage post-release, formerly incarcerated individuals are able to support themselves, build pro-social bonds and add structure to their lives that may help them desist from criminal behavior (Minnesota Department of Corrections, 2011). However, those who seek employment after release are commonly rejected due to their criminal history, and may lack the necessary education, work experience, or skills needed to maintain a long-term job (Evans and Koenig, 2011).

A growing body of research is beginning to show the impact of prison industry programing on the lives of those formerly incarcerated. Many of these programs can provide inmates with a necessary

¹ The recidivism rate is calculated by dividing the number of inmates reconvicted by the number of inmates in the release cohort.

² Pursuant to its own internal practices, MADOC employees are not permitted to contact inmates after release, therefore the follow-up data on inmate's employment after releases is not included in this report.

level of training and work experience prior to release. Industry programs have not only been shown to increase employment across many states and demographics but have also been able to show significant reductions in recidivism, some examples even show economic benefits to the state. In turn, those savings can be reinvested into continued programing.

Results derived from an evaluation of the state of Washington's Correctional Industries (CI) program found that CI program participants displayed statistically lower rates of recidivism, quicker employment times from release, and higher earnings by the end of the study's follow up period (Evans & Koenig, 2011). Similarly promising results were produced in an evaluation of Minnesota's EMPLOY program. 76% of inmates who participated in this program secured meaningful employment within the first year post-release and worked, on average, 400 more hours, earning up to \$5,000 more than comparison groups. Not only did participants in this program have lower reconviction rates for new crimes, but they also showed a 17% less likely chance of reincarceration due to technical violations (Minnesota Department of Corrections, 2011). Likewise, recently released inmates in Iowa's private sector prison industry programs were also more likely to succeed in transitioning into their respective communities. 80% of individuals who participated in this type of programing obtained employment in the first quarter post-release, while only 60% of the control group--those who did not participate in prison industry programming--obtained employment in the same time frame. By the end of the follow up period, which ranged between just under two years to four and one-half years depending on an inmate's release date, only 11% of those who participated in programing were unable to find meaningful employment. Of those who did participate and subsequently found employment, nearly half maintained their first job one year post-release and earned between \$4,381 and \$5,620 more than the comparison group by the end of the follow-up period. In terms of reconviction, between 95.5% and 95.6% of participants of prison industry programing had not been reconvicted by the end of the follow up period (Smith et al., 2006; Prell, 2006).

Taking a slightly different approach, California's self-supporting program titled the California Prison Industry Authority (CALPIA) aims to achieve similar goals of lowering recidivism while providing integral work experience for the ex-inmate. This program has been optimized to provide the state more funding while providing a variety of goods and services that are sold in the private sector. CALPIA manages up to 57 manufacturing, service, and consumable factories across 25 California DOC facilities. Between 2012 and 2013, CALPIA sold \$180.2 million in products and services. Purchases and sales combined gave CALPIA a total economic impact of \$375.4 million, a labor income impact of \$92.6 million and an employment impact of 1,913 jobs. As to recidivism, an evaluation which tracked releasing inmates for a period of over three-years, CALPIA participants experienced reincarceration between 26% to 38% less often than other released California inmates who did not participate in such programing. Furthermore, those who participated in CALPIA *and* the Career Technical Education Program between FY 2007-08 and 2010-11 had a recidivism rate of 7.13% (Harris and Goldman, 2014).

Correctional Industries at the Massachusetts Department of Correction

The mission of Correctional Industries (CI) at the MADOC is to instill a positive work ethic in inmates by providing training and skills for a successful reentry into the community through work opportunities. With the acquired skills of on-the-job training and work ethics gained through CI, releasing inmates have a greater chance of being gainfully employed and succeeding after their release, thus reducing the possibility of recidivism.

MADOC CI employs over 450 inmates at eight institutions (See Appendix). Eligibility for CI is determined by a Classification Board. MADOC CI served 546 state agencies and 1,010 non-state customers from July 1, 2018 to June 5, 2020. Its certification programs are made available to all eligible incarcerated individuals. On average, CI program participants are paid an hourly stipend rate of \$1.10, ranging from \$0.50 to \$1.75 an hour.

Methodology

The analysis herein is based on the 2016 release to the community cohort and examines recidivism rates over a three year follow-up period. The cohort includes criminally sentenced inmates released to the community via parole or expiration of sentence. Areas examined include the number of program participants, the length of their participation, the amount of compensation, the difference in the number of disciplinary reports between program participants and non-participants, participants' demographics, and ultimately the relation between participation in the CI programs and recidivism. The data used in the analyses were derived from MADOC's Inmate Management System (IMS).

Recidivism data was gathered from the MADOC's IMS and the Massachusetts Board of Probation (BOP). Data was derived from the information available at the time of collection and is subject to change. The criminal activity of inmates released to the community during 2016 was tracked through the Massachusetts Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) to determine any re-incarceration within three years of the inmate's release to the community.

An inmate can be re-incarcerated in one of the following ways: technical violation of parole; violation of parole with a new offense; new court commitment to a Massachusetts county, state, or federal facility; technical violation of probation; or probation violation with a new offense. The recidivism rate is calculated by dividing the number of re-incarcerations by the number of releases in a given category.

Program Participation, Hours Worked and Payment Received

The data showed that, of the 2,145 inmates released in 2016, only a small portion of those inmates (8%) were enrolled in CI programs at some time during their incarceration. The overwhelming majority of these inmates did not participate in CI programs (Figure 1).



Inmates who participated in the CI programs were enrolled in the programs for an average of 331 days, measured from the first day of their first payroll week to the last day of their final payroll week before release. However, over one-half of the program participants (59%) participated in the programs for less than six months and another seventeen percent (17%) participated in the programs for six months to less than one year, resulting in three-quarters of participants remaining in the programs for less than 365 days (Figure 2).



Payroll data confirmed that inmates who remained with the industries programs longer naturally worked more hours than those who did not participate in the program as long. As shown in Figure 3,

inmates who participated in the programs for less than six months worked, on average, 162 hours while inmates who joined the programs for two or more years worked an average of 5,060 hours each, or over 30 times more hours than their counterparts with the shortest participation history.



When examining the average time worked per pay period, large differences across categories of participation duration were reduced substantially. On average, inmates who were involved in the programs for two or more years worked about four hours more per pay period than the inmates who participated in the programs for less than six months. The inmates who were in the middle of the two duration categories worked one or two hours more than the shortest duration group and one or two hours less than the longest duration group. However, the number of hours worked in a given pay period does not follow the duration line strictly, as the one year to less than two years category worked about one hour less than inmates in the six-month to less than one year category. One possible reason for the difference is that inmates participating in the CI programs with projected release dates often work fewer hours due to the attendance of additional preparation programs designed to contribute to the inmate's successful release (Figure 4).



By the same token, inmates who were with the CI programs longer made more money than the shorter duration counterparts. As shown in Figure 5, inmates who worked for two or more years made an average of \$4,326. In contrast, inmates involved with the programs for less than six months made only \$161. For inmates that fell in the two middle categories, the total average payment they received also fell between the two ends of the spectrum. On average, CI program participants were paid an hourly rate of \$0.91, ranging from \$0.50 to \$1.39 an hour.



Program Participation and Its Association with Disciplinary Reports (D-reports)

Of the inmates released in 2016, about 70% had at least one D-report during the time they were incarcerated before release. A higher percentage of inmates who took part in the CI programs (75%) received at least one D-report than the inmates who did not participate in the programs (70%). The difference, however, is not statistically significant at the 95% confidence level³ (Figure 6).



On average, inmates who participated in the CI programs received 6.1 D-reports during the time they were incarcerated before their release in 2016, higher than the 4.6 D-reports received by the non-program participants. Since the total number of D-reports tends to grow with the length of incarceration, the average number of D-reports received per year revealed that program participants received about the same number of D-reports each year as their non-participating counterparts. Participation in the CI programs does not appear to reduce the number of D-reports that an inmate received in total or on a yearly basis (Figure 7).

³ Statistical significance refers to whether any differences observed between groups being studied are "real" or due to chance. In most sciences, results yielding a p-value of .05 or 95% confidence level are on the borderline of statistical significance. At this level or higher, we would conclude that the differences observed between groups are not due to chance.



Across the durations of program participation, inmates in the longest duration category had a lower total number of D-reports than the two middle groups and were on a par with inmates in the shortest duration group. Furthermore, this duration had the lowest average number of D-reports per year than the three other groups, indicating that working in the CI programs for two or more years is associated with the reduced number of D-reports (Figure 8).



The number of D-reports reported in Figure 8 covers the entire time in which an inmate was incarcerated. Figures 9 and 10 look at these numbers in two separate time periods: the time before program participation, and the time since program participation before release. As shown in Figure

9, inmates in the shortest participation group had the lowest total number of D-reports (1.8) before they joined the CI programs compared with about three (3) D-reports for the three other groups. On the other hand, inmates in the longest participation group had the lowest number of D-reports per year, but none of the differences shown here are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level (Figure 9).



Compared with the number of D-reports that inmates received before they joined the CI programs, participation in the programs did not reduce the number of D-reports received. On the contrary, the average number of D-reports increased for inmates in the three lower duration categories and the average number of D-reports per year stayed about the same as the number of D-reports prior to starting with the programs. The only group that had a reduced number of D-reports and D-reports per year was the group with the longest duration of participation. It further confirms that participation in the CI program for two or more years was associated with the reduced number of D-reports D-reports per year (Figure 10).



In summary, participation in the CI programs does not necessarily lower the number of D-reports that inmates received. However, staying with the programs for two or more years is associated with a reduced number of D-reports both in total and per year.

Program Participation and Its Association with Recidivism

A look into the relation between the length of program participation and recidivism reveals a decreasing rate of recidivism correlating with a longer period of program participation. The inmates who participated in the programs for less than six months had the highest recidivism rate of 37%, which was reduced to 20% among inmates whose involvement in the programs ranged from six months to less than a year and further reduced to 17% among inmates who stayed with the programs for one or more years. In other words, as the length of program participation increased, the rate of recidivism decreased (Figure 11).



Combining the above three length categories into two categories along the six-month line and comparing the data with that of non-participating inmates reveals that enrollment in the programs alone had no effect on reducing overall recidivism. Compared with the recidivism rate of the large majority of inmates who were not enrolled in the programs (30%), the rate of recidivism was higher among inmates who participated in the programs for less than six months (37%). A substantial drop to 19% in the rate of recidivism is associated only with inmates who had participated in the programs for six months or more before release. It suggests that as inmates stayed with a CI program for a longer duration, their probability to recidivate within three years after release was reduced (Figure 12).



Program Participants vs. Non-Participants

An investigation revealed that the key demographics of inmates participating in the programs were statistically different from the same demographics of those inmates not participating in the programs in terms of governing offense category, release institution security level, post-release supervision, age at release, and time served in prison. There was no statistical difference among participating and non-participating inmates in relation to the demographics of gender, race, mandatory sentence, and general recidivism risk score.

Inmates in both participation groups, those who worked less than half a year and worked half a year or more, were more likely to be in the violent (person and sex offenses) as opposed to non-violent (drug, property, and other offenses) crime category than inmates who did not participate in the programs. They also appeared to be older than non-participants at the time of release and served longer time in prison. In addition, inmates in medium security were less likely to be in the participation group while inmates in lower security were more likely to be included in the CI programs. When looking at types of post-release criminal justice supervision, more CI program participating inmates fell in the post-release parole only category with the least in the probation only category (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Participation in Correctional I	ndustries Programs by Key	Demographics			
Variable Name	Category	Not Worked	Worked Less Than Half-a-Year	Worked Half-a- Year or More	Count
Gender	Male	91.5%	4.8%	3.7%	1,640
	Female	93.9%	4.2%	2.0%	505
Race	White	92.9%	4.3%	2.9%	1,051
	Black	89.1%	6.6%	4.3%	512
	Hispanic	93.6%	3.6%	2.8%	531
	Other	90.0%	4.0%	6.0%	50
Mandatory	Yes	91.0%	6.0%	3.0%	467
	No	92.4%	4.3%	3.3%	1,678
Governing Offense Category **	Non_violent	93.8%	4.3%	1.9%	1,157
	Violent	90.1%	5.1%	4.9%	988
Release Institution Security Level**	Maximum	91.7%	6.4%	1.9%	264
	Medium	93.9%	2.2%	3.9%	1,064
	Minimum	90.1%	6.5%	3.4%	504
	Pre-Release/ELMC	89.5%	8.6%	1.9%	313
Post-release Supervision**	No supervision	92.1%	4.3%	3.7%	847
	Parole & Probatior	91.6%	5.6%	2.8%	178
	Parole Only	86.7%	9.5%	3.9%	285
	Probation Only	94.0%	3.2%	2.8%	835
Age at Release **	Mean Age	37.1	39.2	42.5	2,145
General Recidivism Risk Score	Mean Risk Score	6.52	6.59	6.15	1,922
Time Served **	Mean Number of E	1,175	1,574	3,489	2,145

* denotes p < .05, ** denotes p <.01

Given the demographic differences among the three categories of program involvement recognized above, these differences could influence the association between the longer enrollment time in the CI programs and the lower rate of recidivism shown in Figure 12. To examine whether such an association sustains when controlling for the influences of these variables, a logistic regression analysis was performed.

Logistic Regression Model

The ten predictor variables in the logistic regression analysis included seven binary variables and three continuous variables. The binary variables were program participation, gender, race, mandatory sentence, governing offense category, release institution security level, and post-release supervision. The continuous variables were age at release, general risk score, and time served.

- Program participation was measured using two binary indicators of whether an inmate worked for less than six months (5%) or for six months or more (3%); inmates who did not participate in the programs served as the reference group (92%).
- Gender was measured using a binary indicator of whether an inmate was male (76%); females served as the reference group (24%).
- Race was measured using three binary indicators of Black (24%), Hispanic (25%) and other races (2%). White was the reference group (49%).
- Mandatory sentence was measured using a binary indicator of whether the Massachusetts General Law governing an inmate's governing offense contains a mandatory restriction (22%); those not having a governing offense containing a mandatory restriction served as the reference group (78%).
- Governing offense category was measured using a binary indicator of whether an inmate committed a violent governing offense (46%); non-violent governing offense served as the reference group (54%).
- Release institution security level was measured using three binary indicators: medium security level (50%), minimum security level (23%), and pre-release/Electronic Monitoring (ELMO) (15%); maximum security level served as the reference group (12%).
- Post-release supervision was measured using three binary indicators of whether an inmate was placed under post-release supervision of parole and probation (8%), parole only (13%) or probation only (39%); no post-release supervision served as the reference group (40%).
- Age at release was a continuous variable that measured the age of an inmate at the time of release. Inmates in this study had an average age of 38 when they were released from prison, ranging from age 18 to 78.
- General risk score, another continuous variable, was a measure of inmates' recidivism risk based on the COMPAS Risk Assessment⁴. On average, inmates under analysis had a risk score of 6.5, ranging from a score of 1, the lowest risk, to a score of 10, the highest risk score.

⁴ *COMPAS:* Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions is an automated risk/needs assessment tool utilized to inform the development of an inmate's personalized program plan. COMPAS has been normed and validated to the Massachusetts Department of Correction population.

• Time served was a continuous variable that measured the number of days an inmate stayed in the MADOC custody plus jail credits received prior to sentencing. Inmates released in 2016 served an average of 1,269 days prior to their release, ranging from 1 day to 15,751 days.

A simple logistic regression model that tested the impact of CI work participation on recidivism confirmed the findings shown in Figure 12. Compared with the inmates who did not take part in the CI programs, participation in the programs for six months or more would reduce the odds of recidivism by a factor of 0.538 while involvement in the program for less than six months produced no effect on lowering the rate of recidivism (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Impact of Program Participation on Three-Year Recidivism (N=2,145)			
Variable Name	Coefficient (B)	Odds Ratio Exp (B)	Significance (p)
Worked Less Six Months	0.326	1.385	0.126
Worked Six Months Or More *	-0.62	0.538	0.046

* denotes p < .05

Such impact of program participation on recidivism remained largely intact when other predictor variables were introduced into the model. Enrollment in the programs for less than six months had no effect on reducing recidivism and instead would increase the odds of recidivism by a factor of 1.575 when compared with inmates who did not take part in the programs. Conversely, participation in the programs for six months or more could reduce the odds of recidivism by a factor of 0.733. However, neither effect is statistically significant (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Impact of Correctional Industries P	rograms on Three-Y	ear Recidivism (N=1,922)
Variable Name	Coefficient (B)	Odds Ratio Exp (B)	Significance (p)
Worked Less Than Six Months	0.454	1.575	0.053
Worked Six Months Or More	-0.311	0.733	0.369
Gender	0.118	1.125	0.503
Race: Black	-0.086	0.918	0.534
Race: Hispanic	-0.143	0.867	0.305
Race: Other	-0.332	0.718	0.392
Mandatory *	-0.311	0.733	0.047
Offense Category	-0.126	0.882	0.337
Release Security Level: Medium *	-0.402	0.669	0.011
Release Security Level: Minimum **	-1.028	0.358	<.001
Release Security Level: Pre-release/ELMO **	-0.751	0.472	<.001
Supervision: Parole & Probation **	0.863	2.369	<.001
Supervision: Parole Only **	1.064	2.897	<.001
Supervision: Probation Only **	0.433	1.542	<.001
General Recidivism Risk Score **	0.221	1.247	<.001
Time Served	0	1	0.096
Age at Release	-0.012	0.989	0.055

* denotes p < .05, ** denotes p <.01

On the other hand, statistically significant impacts on recidivism were found with post-release supervision, general recidivism risk score, release institution security level, and mandatory sentence. Compared with inmates with no post-release supervision, supervision by parole and probation,

parole only, and probation only would increase the odds of recidivism by a factor of 2.369, 2.897 and 1.542 respectively. As the risk score increased from low to high, the odds of recidivism increased by a factor of 1.247. In contrast, compared with inmates released from maximum security institutions, inmates released from lower security institutions (medium, minimum and pre-release/ELMO) would decrease the odds of recidivism by a factor of 0.669, 0.358 and 0.472 correspondingly. Furthermore, compared with released inmates whose governing offense contained no mandatory restrictions, mandatory restrictions would decrease the odds of recidivism by a factor of 0.733.

Gender, race, governing offence, time served and age at release appeared to have no statistically significant impacts on the rate of recidivism.

Summary

Less than 10% of inmates released in 2016 participated in CI programs. On average, they were enrolled in the programs for 331 days with the majority in the programs for less than six months. Inmates who stayed with the programs longer worked more hours and made more money during the time they were with the programs than the inmates who were not with the programs as long. On the other hand, they worked approximately as many hours per pay period as their shorter-participating counterparts.

Participation in the CI programs for two or more years was associated with a reduced number of D-reports. Such an association was found with both the total number of D-reports and the average number of D-reports per year that an inmate received during the time they were enrolled in the programs before release. Alternatively, participation in the programs for less than two years showed no effect on reducing the number of D-reports.

By the same token, participation in the CI programs for six months or more was associated with a lower rate of recidivism though such an association did not pass statistical testing when controlled for the influences of other predictor variables. It suggests that participation in the CI programs could potentially lower the rate of recidivism, but more studies need to be done to confirm such a conclusion statistically. Our analyses on the 2015 and 2016 release cohorts revealed that other variables, such as general recidivism risk score (2015, 2016), age at release (2015), post-release supervision (2016), release institution security level (2016) and mandatory sentence (2016) had stronger influences on reducing the rate of recidivism than participation in a CI program.

In short, given the association found between participation in the CI programs and the lower number of D-reports and the lower rate of recidivism, CI appeared to have a positive influence on the lives of program participants if they stayed with the programs for at least six months, and preferably for two or more years.

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Appendix

Massachusetts Correctional Industries Programs

FACILITY NAME	CORRECTIONAL INDUSTRIALS PROGRAM SPECIFICATION
MCI CEDAR JUNCTION:	MCI Cedar Junction is home to the License Plate Shop where inmates produce license plates in accordance with requirements set forth by the Registry of Motor Vehicles.
MCI FRAMINGHAM:	MCI Framingham currently manufactures United States, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, POW/MIA, and custom flags, laundry bags and belt pouches. The inmates learn valuable skills that are related to the various employment opportunities in the sewing industry within the state. MCI Framingham's Embroidery Shop can embroider caps, jackets, T-shirts and many other items.
MCI NORFOLK:	MCI Norfolk has inmates working in a wide range of manufacturing settings. This operation houses a Clothing Shop where fabric is cut from rolls and sewn to create garments used in a number of areas throughout the Commonwealth; the Mattress Shop produces a variety of mattresses for use in a number of environments; the Janitorial shop has a complete line of cleaning products available; the Metal operation is able to supply custom fabricated metal cell furniture to provided specifications; the Upholstery Shop produces a number of quality upholstered office chairs, and can re-upholster sofas, chairs, and other furniture; a Binder Shop which produces 3 ring vinyl binders in a number of sizes; and lastly, a Furniture Assembly Shop that assembles various furniture items from a number of outstanding furniture manufacturers.
MCI SHIRLEY:	MCI Shirley offers a sew shop to inmates who are interested in learning how to sew. The program produces sheets, towels, and socks which are all manufactured at the facility. Inmates learn valuable skills that are related to the various employment opportunities in the sewing industry within the state. MCI Shirley also offers a woodshop program where inmates learn to build various types of wood furniture consisting of, but not limited to, desks, lockers, bookcases, kitchen cabinets, outdoor furniture, and credenzas.

NORTH CENTRAL INSTITUTION (NCCI-GARDNER):	The Optical Shop is a full-scale eyewear laboratory providing services to many CORRECTIONAL providers throughout Massachusetts. The inmates currently working at this site grind, polish, and assemble eyeglasses for a number of customers. The industrial instructors at NCCI-Gardner are facilitating the process of testing inmates working in the Optical Shop to gain a certification from the American Board of Optometry, a nationally recognized organization. The test is designed to reveal the competency in the optical field and their overall knowledge. The individual taking this exam will be provided a certification from the American Board of Opticianry (ABO). This in turn, will allow the inmate to show qualifications and a work history to potential employers.
OLD COLONY CORRECTIONAL CENTER:	Printing is the trade being taught at Old Colony Correctional Center's state-of-the-art Printing Plant. Inmates working in the print shop are able to use the latest technology to produce a quality product and therefore also gain valuable skills which are easily transferable to private industry. Products offered vary from letterhead to continuous forms, to City and Town Reports. There is also a Validation Shop that produces Registry of Motor Vehicle stickers and decals.
MCI SHIRLEY, MINIMUM:	Inmates in the Engraving Shop create designs and manufacture the following products: memorial bricks, plexiglass safety shields for restaurants, acrylic designs, wooden coasters, granite coasters, granite designs, wooden door signs, and coffee mug "tumblers". Skills are being taught to inmates utilizing the latest technology for software design and machine work. Inmates learn valuable skills that are related to various employment opportunities in the community.
PONDVILLE CORRECTIONAL CENTER:	Massachusetts Correctional Industries' Central Office utilizes inmates from this facility to perform varied tasks.