

# Designing for Humanity

How can the architecture of correctional centers improve the lives of inmates?


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# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to look at the architectural characteristics of successful correctional centers and deduce what specific aspects make them so successful. America is known world-wide for its correctional system and the harsh punishments assigned to those who come in contact with it. Many citizens of the United States believe that harsh punishment is a good thing, they believe that with harsher punishment comes reform. Select individuals believe the opposite is true; they believe that harsh punishment harms individuals and in turn increases the percent of recidivism. Research done by the National Institute of Justice supports this belief and shows that long prison sentences do very little to prevent future crime.<sup>1</sup>



The intent of the American correctional system is to deal with everything “involving the punishment, treatment, and supervision of persons who have been convicted of crimes. These functions commonly include imprisonment, parole and probation. A typical correctional institution is a prison”.<sup>2</sup> Within the American penal system there are separate branches including The Federal Bureau of Prisons and the Department of Corrections. Every state has a Department of Corrections that oversees the incarceration and release of individuals on a state level. Prisons of all security levels in America are repeatedly filled to capacity with no signs of change in the future.<sup>3</sup>

**High security prisons** are reserved for the most violent and dangerous offenders. These prisons include far more guards than both minimum and medium security, and very little freedom. Each person confined to such a prison is considered to be a high-risk individual.

**Medium security prisons** are the standard facilities used to house most criminals. They feature cage-style housing, armed guards, and a much more regimented daily routine than minimum security.

**Minimum security prisons** are usually reserved for white collar criminals who have committed acts such as embezzlement or fraud. Although these are serious crimes, they are non-violent in nature and therefore the perpetrators are not considered to be a risk for violence. These perpetrators are sent to facilities that offer a dormitory-type living environment, fewer guards, and more personal freedoms.





Law Enforcement



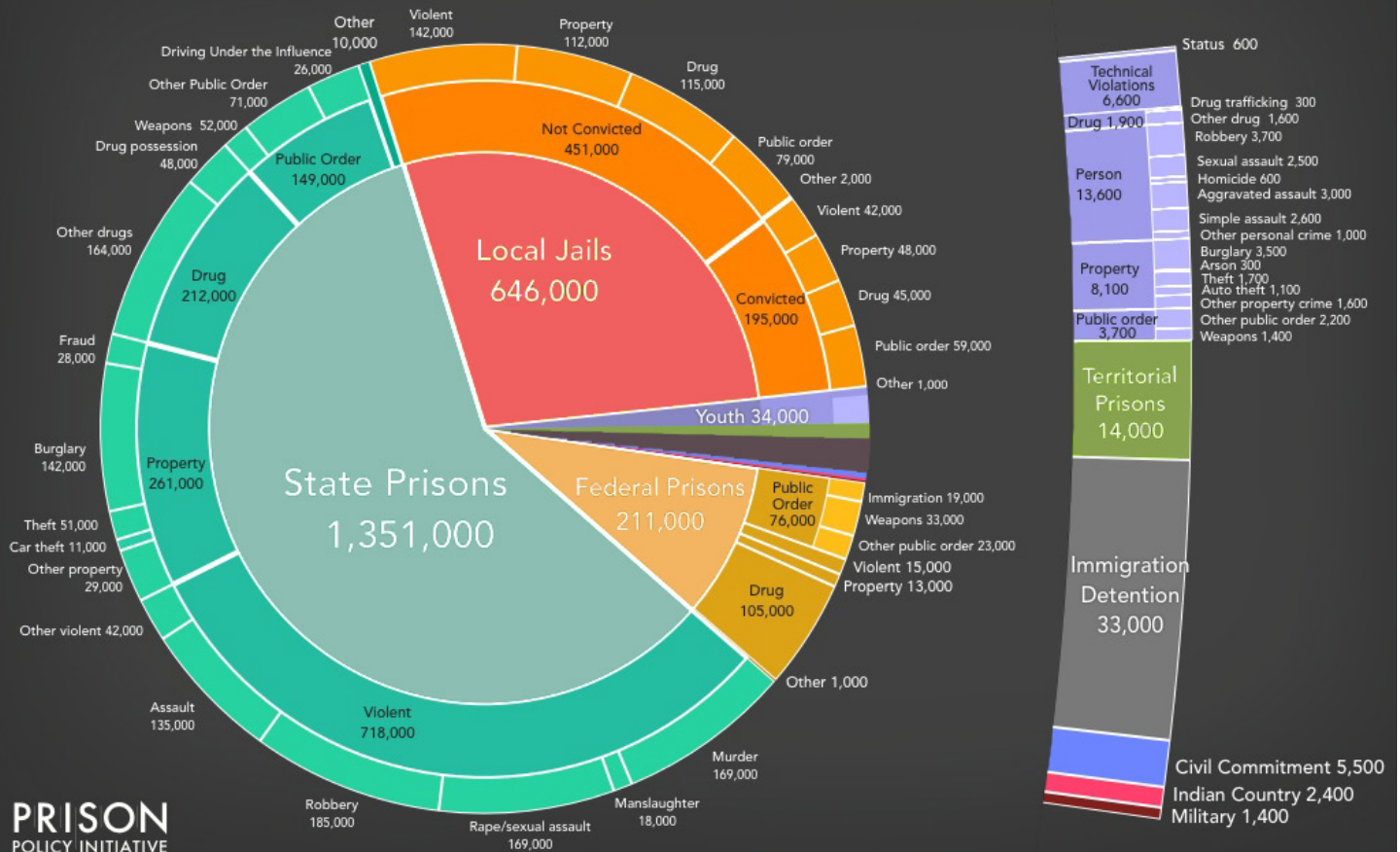
Courts



Corrections

## How many people are locked up in the United States?

The United States locks up more people, per capita, than any other nation. But grappling with why requires us to first consider the many types of correctional facilities and the reasons that 2.3 million people are confined there.

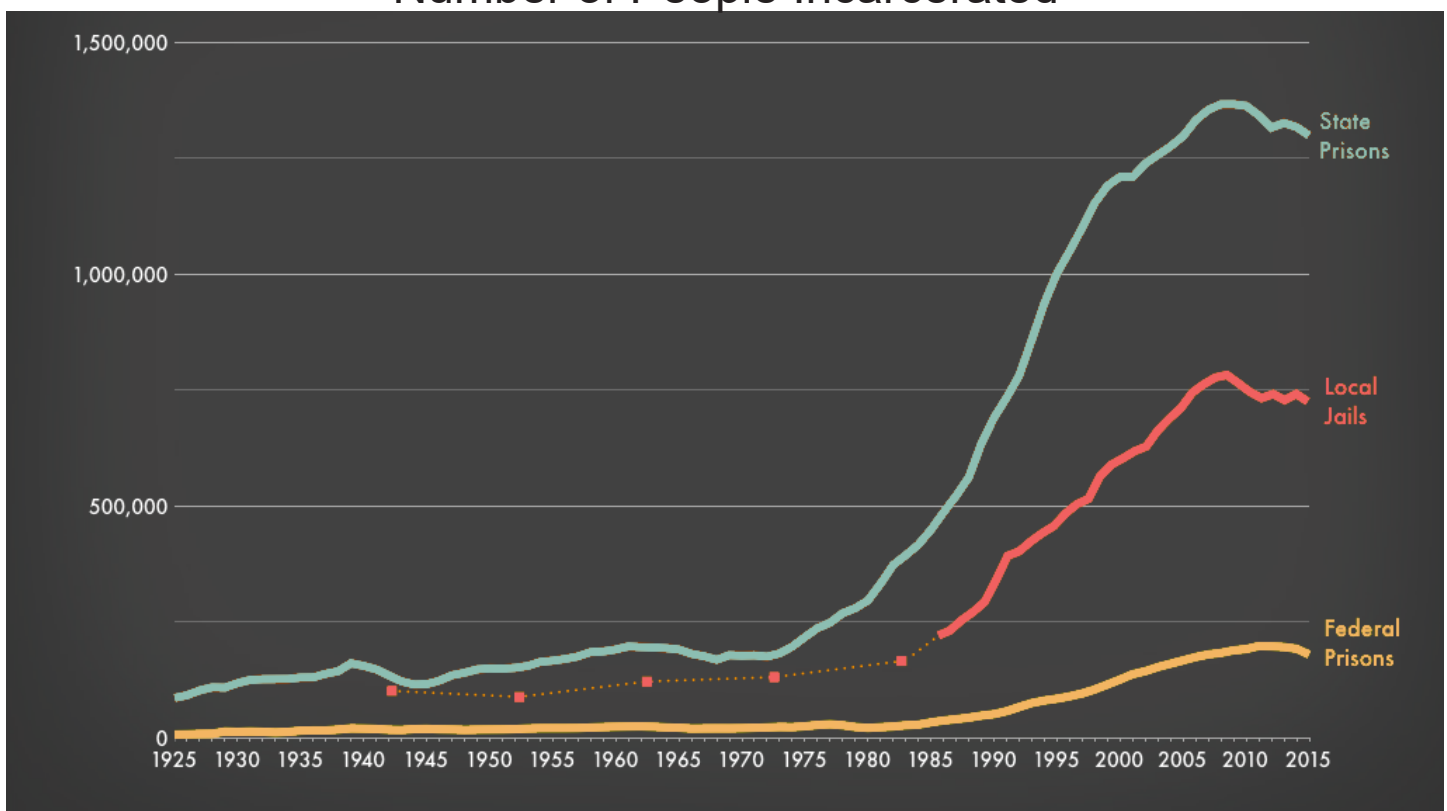


**PRISON**  
POLICY INITIATIVE

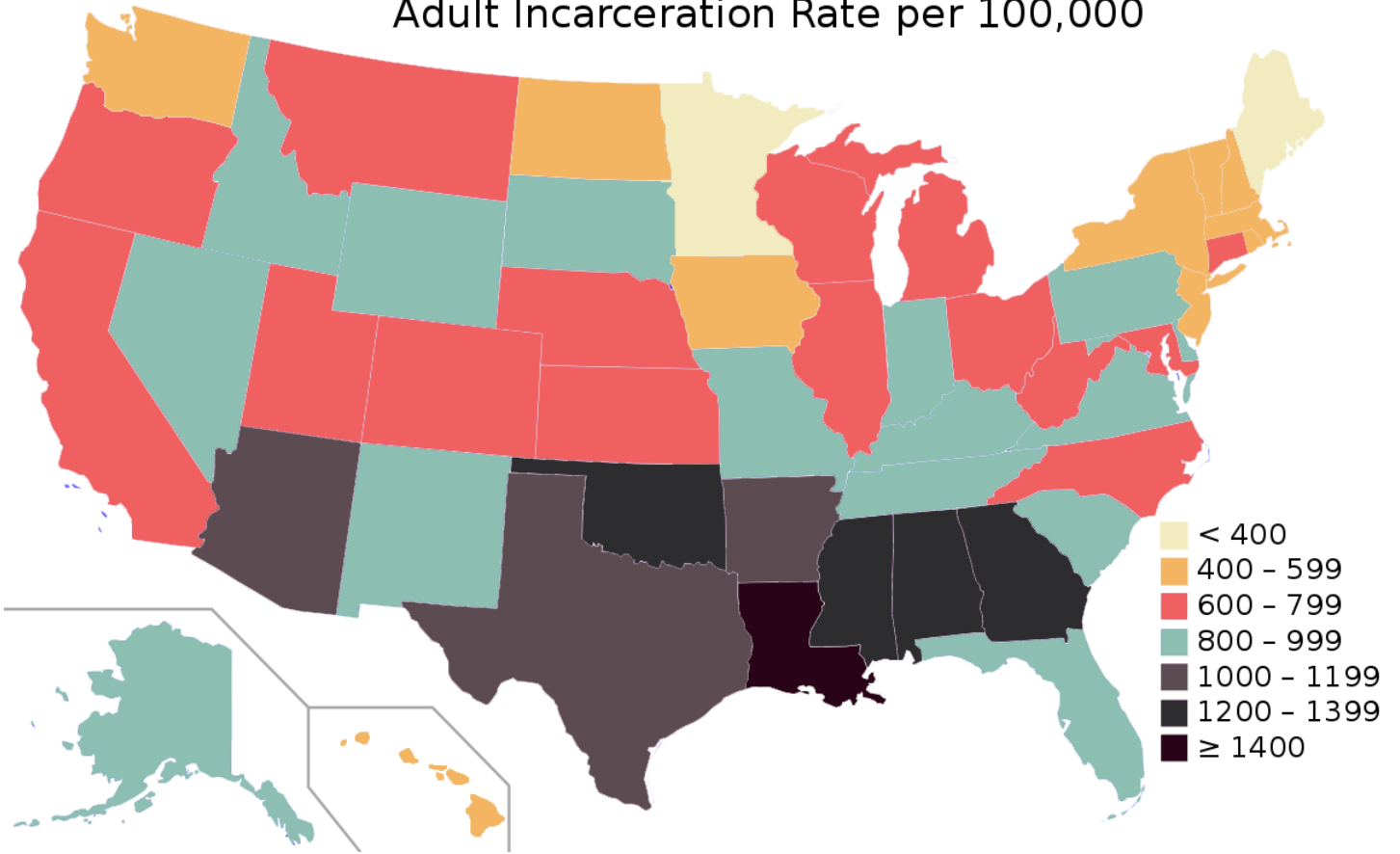
Sources and data notes: See <http://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2016.html>

Under the umbrella of corrections are several types of facilities ranging from county jails, state prisons, all the way to maximum security penitentiaries. Each facility has a different purpose and with that, a different level of security. Correctional centers are typically low security buildings that house individuals who have proved they have the right to be there. Often these people are moved from state penitentiaries to correctional centers when they have a small remainder of time left in their sentence or are placed there immediately after the verdict to serve a shorter sentence. The goal of most correctional centers is to prepare inmates for life outside of prison. While this goal is valuable, some facilities have little success. There is room for improvement in many facets.

## Number of People Incarcerated

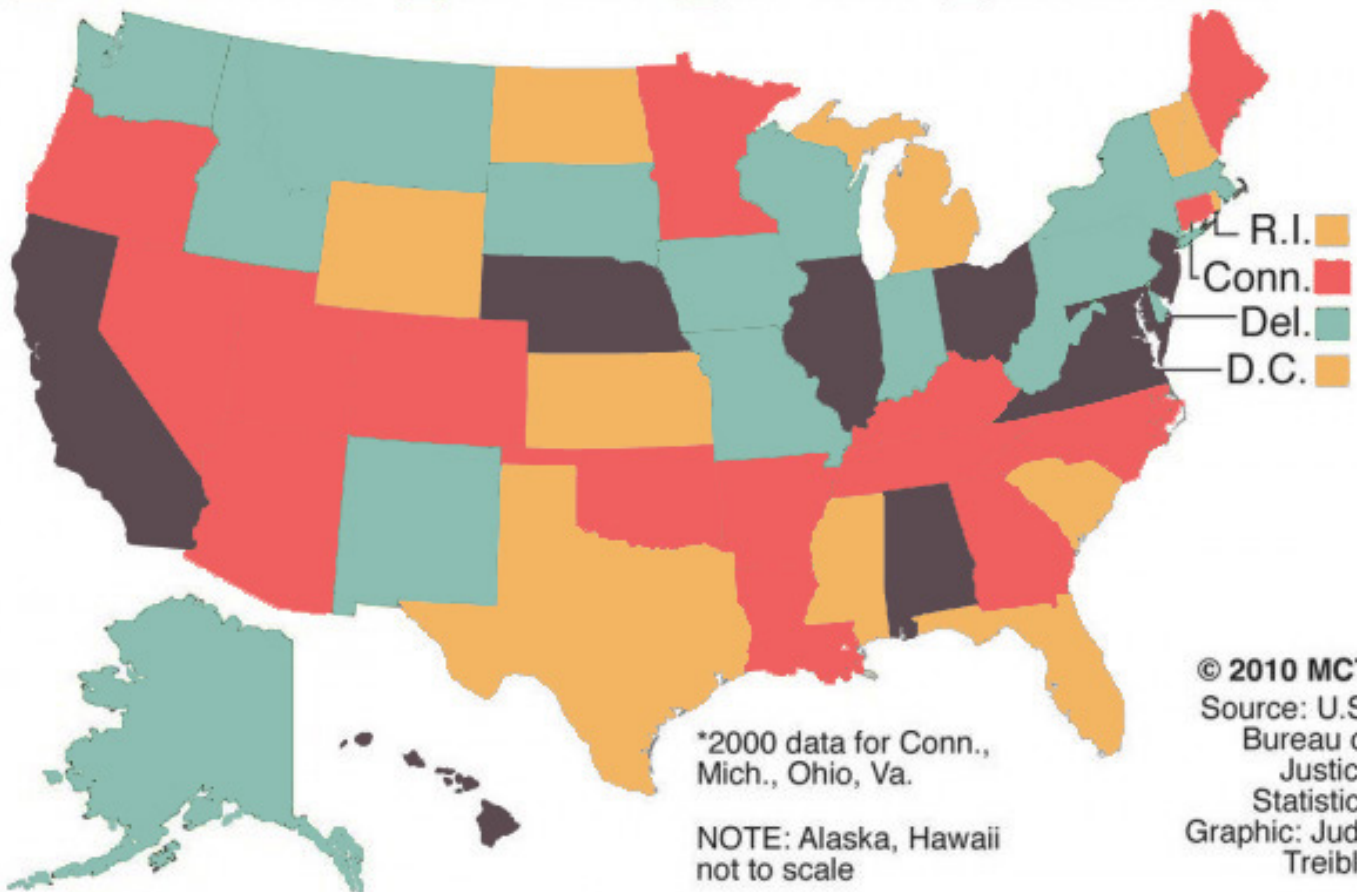


## Adult Incarceration Rate per 100,000



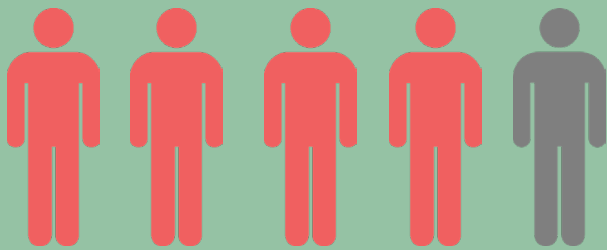
## Rate of overcrowding

■ Less than 100%   
 ■ 100-109%   
 ■ 110-139%   
 ■ 140% or more



Currently, America has the second highest prison population rate in the world at 666 per 100,000 of the national population, beat only by the Republic of Seychelles, a chain of islands located in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Africa. As of 2014, the prison population of Seychelles is 738 per 100,000.<sup>4</sup> This statistic leads people to believe that the US has decreased its population within the prison system which is not true. In fact, the United States is still the leader in by a long shot at 2,145,100 with the runner up being China at 1,649,804 regarding the prison population total. Not only is America the top for incarceration rates, we also have one of the highest rates of recidivism. In 2005, the five-year recidivism rate in America was 76.6%, this means that almost 80% of people who are released from prison will end up reincarcerated within 5 years of their release. This fact is even more staggering when considering the fact that “at least 95% of all state prisoners will be released from prison at some point”.<sup>5</sup>

Although there is not much information reported from other countries about their yearly recidivism rates, we know that the rate of recidivism in Norway has dropped below 20% within the past decade. This is due in part to the laws that have been implemented nationwide, which reflect their outlook on how prisons should be run. While judges in America are sure to sentence longer and harsher punishments, Norway is busy working to rehabilitate and release inmates.



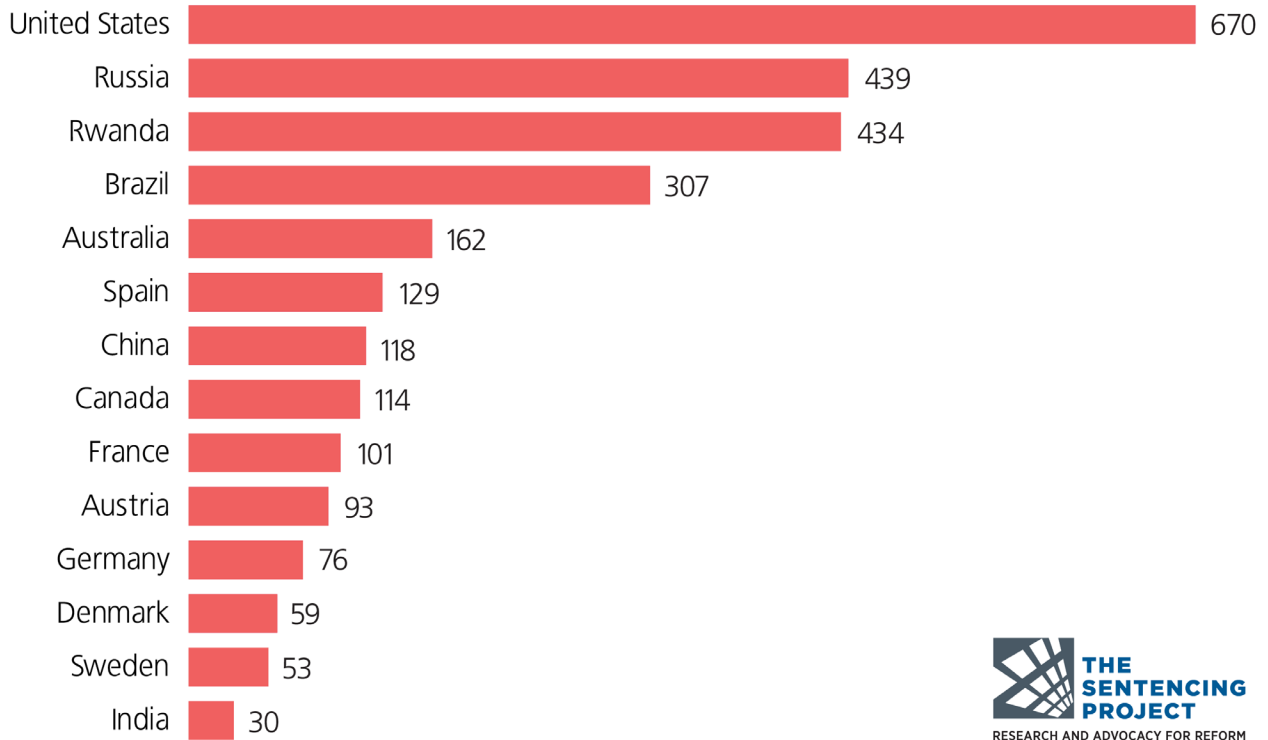
Within 5 years of release, 3 of 4 inmates will end up rearrested



At least 95% of all state prisoners will be released from prison at some point

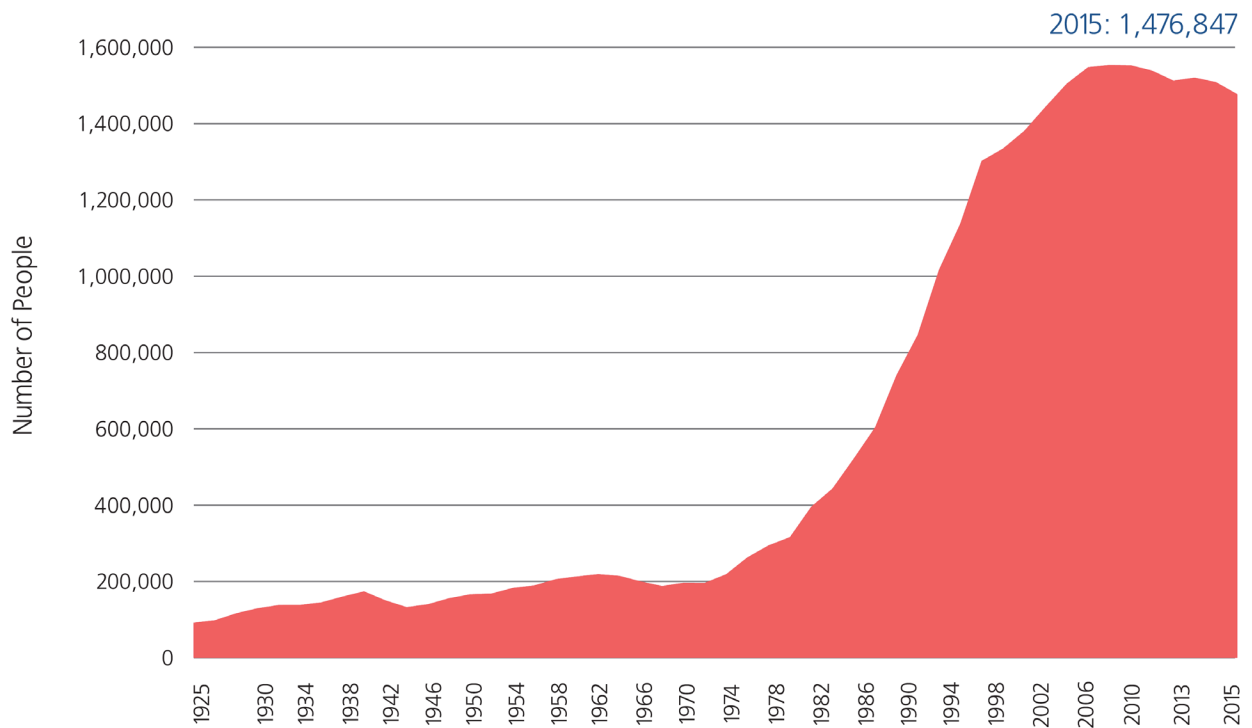


## International Rates of Incarceration per 100,000



Source: Walmsley, R. (2016). *World Prison Brief*. London: Institute for Criminal Policy Research. Available online: <http://www.prisonstudies.org/world-prison-brief>.


## U.S. State and Federal Prison Population, 1925-2015



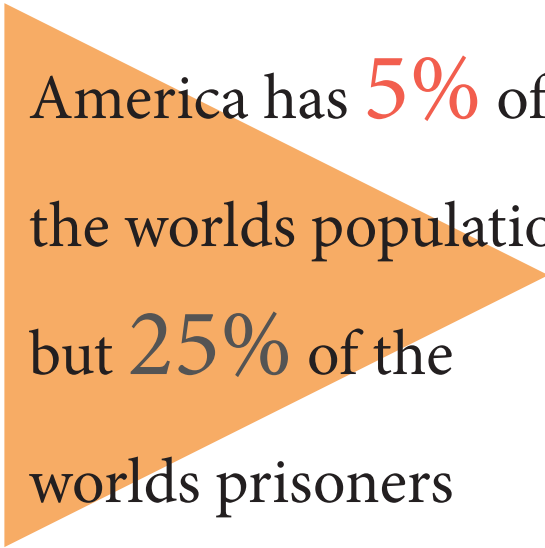
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics *Prisoners Series*.



Studies show that while the chance of getting caught is an effective way to deter criminals, long sentences in prison do little or nothing to lower crime rates.<sup>6</sup> Not only do long sentences do nothing for crime rates, they might actually end up doing more harm to inmates than we previously thought. “Evidence instead suggests that being locked away scars, stigmatizes and damages inmates. A history of incarceration has been linked to vulnerability to disease, greater likelihood of cigarette smoking and even premature death”.<sup>7</sup> These are only a few of the issues we see in people after years of incarceration. Not to mention the serious lack of life skills given to anyone who suffers life inside.



30-60%  
of inmates have  
substance abuse  
problems



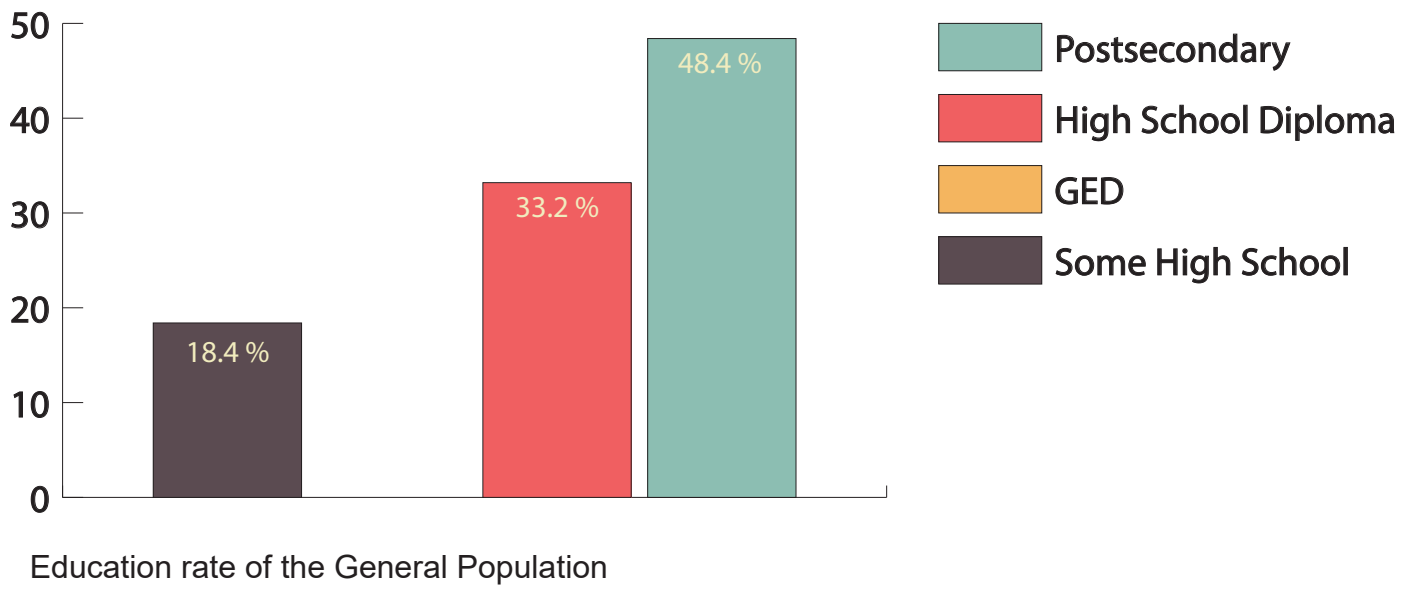
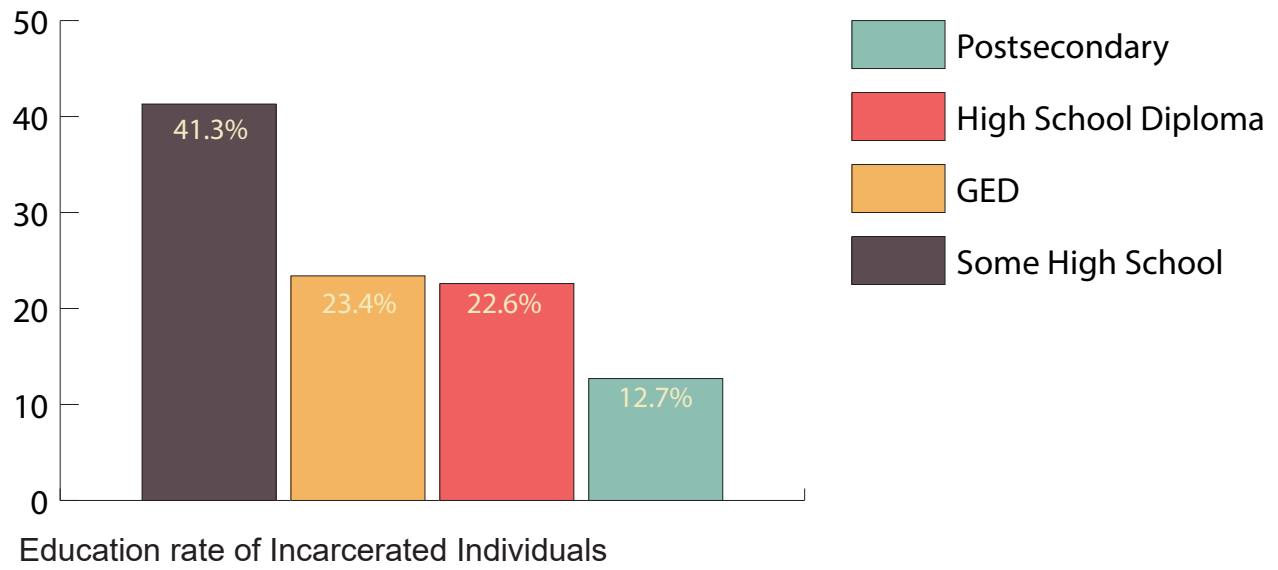
America has 5% of  
the worlds population  
but 25% of the  
worlds prisoners

The average offender  
released in 2009

served **2 years** in  
custody, **54% more**  
than the average offender  
released in 1990.

**1 in 31** Adults  
in the US are either  
incarcerated or on  
probation or parole

Only **8.5%** of  
federal prison  
inmates have  
committed violent  
offenses



If America continues to lock people up at the current rate, there needs to be a change in the way rehabilitation is dealt with. Recently there have been changes starting to be made in how inmates are dealt with and what is being done in order to help their rehabilitation. Even with these recent changes, there is more we can do. With little to no technical skills or education, there are very few options for these individuals. It is for this exact reason that so many people end up reoffending. To change this, some correctional centers provide opportunities to be educated both in a classroom and in work environments. Classes provide an outlet to learn and advance in their education by passing their GED while work programs allow inmates to learn technical skills that will help them when they are released.

While America has done a great job of offering more learning opportunities, there needs to be a shift in the architecture that responds to these changes. Putting the needs of inmates first is key for the future of corrections. Having access to natural sunlight, nature and the immediate surroundings is a basic human right. These factors are all important when designing a healthy environment but there is still more that can be done, boundaries need to be pushed in order to make the necessary changes toward evidence based design.



A 2013 RAND Corporation study showed that participation in prison education, including both academic and vocational programming, was associated with an over 40 percent reduction in recidivism



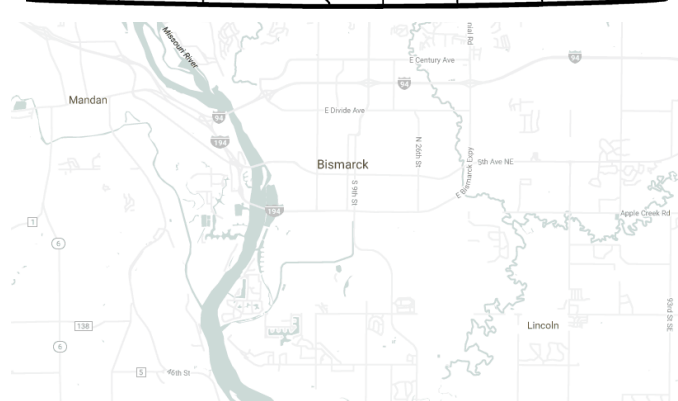
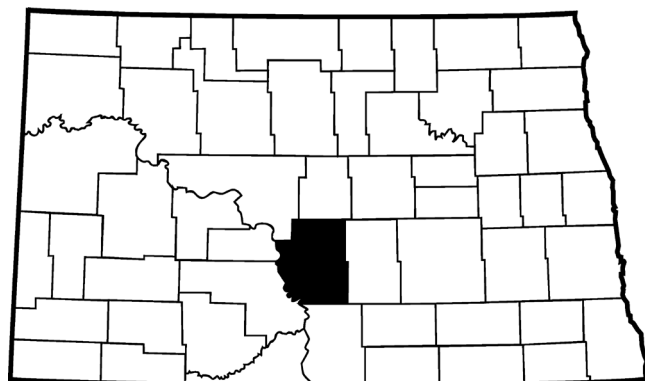
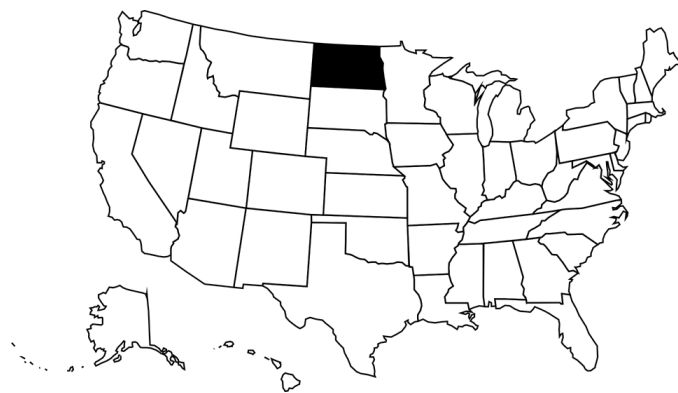


# METHODOLOGY & PROCESS

This study used articles and other published works to learn more about correctional centers around the world. The majority of these centers were located in Scandinavian countries, with a few located in other locations. The goal was to get a clear picture of the current standing of correctional centers through case studies matched with research done by psychologists and other professionals. The information that was found was then used to deduce what key features should be included in a correctional center that focuses on improving the lives of inmates. A great deal of time was spent focusing on case studies from around the world. By looking at what has been done in a variety of correctional centers, conclusions were made about what the future of corrections could be. When looking at what the successful facilities had in common, it was easy to see what needs to be done.



To further the research on this topic, the author visited one of the American correctional centers she had been researching. Missouri River Correctional Center is located in Bismarck, ND along with the state penitentiary and youth correctional center. To say North Dakota has figured out how to deal with corrections is an understatement. The Director of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation of North Dakota, Leann Bertsch, has worked extremely hard to change the way North Dakota deals with inmates. She has turned to Scandinavian prisons to base policy changes on. Some of the biggest changes have been in how inmates are housed. Portable modular units were installed on MRCC grounds with the idea that good behavior will result in better accommodations.<sup>8</sup> Inmates responded to the changes with respect and gratitude in hopes that they would get a chance to move from the dorm style rooms into the individual rooms. The results of these changes have been two-fold, more freedom was achieved at the correctional center level and lower incarceration rates were accomplished within the state penitentiary. MRCC is one of few examples of open prisons located in America; another nod to Scandinavian prisons.





Before visiting Missouri River Correctional Center, it was required that all the proper paperwork be completed and returned. A background check was filled out, a research agreement was signed, and a Prison Rape Elimination Act compliance was acknowledged. These measures were taken before even entering the prison. Additional paperwork was filed before interviewing Department of Corrections employees along with registered architects. The institutional Review Board at North Dakota State University reviewed and signed off on all questions prior to interviews taking place. There were two sets of questions compiled, one for DoC employees and another for architects. Every question had a different purpose, some were intended to gauge knowledge, while others were meant to provide an opinion.

During the visit to MRCC, the author saw the grounds and buildings before talking to members of the staff. Through this experience she was able to get a better understanding of how correctional centers are run in the United States but more specifically, how this correctional center is run. The staff answered all questions and through that were able to discuss facts and opinions. The staff spends a great deal of their own time at the facility and know what is needed to run a successful program.

The interviews at Missouri River Correctional Center were conducted like a conversation. Two guards, a case manager, and the warden shared their thoughts, needs, and experiences. They were candid and honest through it all. They talked about the fact that they needed more room for education and vocation rather than wishing for larger, nicer offices for themselves. They each had an idea about what could be done to improve the way prisons are run. One idea was to include more outdoor classroom space to expose inmates to nature directly, another idea was to design a campus that allows inmates to structure their own days which would create a greater sense of normalcy.

Facility:	Natural Light	Cells	Dorms	Cabins	Open Prison	Large Grounds
1. Missouri River Correctional	●		●	●	●	●
2. Las Colinas	●		●			●
3. Leoben	●			●		
4. Bastoy	●				●	●
5. Mas d' Enric	●		●	●		
6. Halden			●			●





## Interview Questions: DOC Employee

1. What do you think about the idea of giving prisoners technology to use as aids in their rehabilitation?
  - Inmates are allowed to purchase a tablet to use in their free time. It holds books, music, games, and can be used to write emails. All emails are checked by staff before being sent. Games and books are bought and downloaded much like an ipod, phone or tablet.
  - Inmates have access to computers while they are in the classroom and use ipads to aid in their education as well
  - The warden and staff see a lot of benefits with allowing technology within the facility. These devices are similar or the same as ones they will see upon release so it is good to get used to them.
  
2. If a new facility were to be built, architecturally, what would you want to be included in the building?
  - Education:
    - 1 computer room with a lot of outlets
    - 2 GED classrooms with 10 chairs/ desks.
      - It gets too overwhelming to have more than that.
      - The best configuration is a semi-circle.
    - Dedicated Read-Write room with the correct configuration (desks in the form of an L)
      - This configuration encourages people to talk and interact.
    - Several outdoor classrooms.
      - Possibly with a pergola for shading in the summer.
    - Teachers office for desk and private work space.
    - A private bathroom off the teacher's office could work.
    - One of the classrooms should have a large fish tank in it for Emma, the teacher.
    - All classrooms should have a lot of natural light
    - Storage closet for books, supplies, and area to hang graduation robes
  - Kitchen:
    - Larger cooler and Freezer so they don't have to order food all the time
    - Larger dishwasher
    - Walk in cooler
    - More organized storage
  - Recreation areas:
    - A gym with walking track, more weights
    - flexible classroom space for things like yoga, meditation, classes
    - Outdoor recreation areas
    - Indoor Basketball court
  - Dorms:
    - More single or double dorms, less large group dorms
    - Bathrooms in the unit, less shared
    - More bunks in facility 250-300
    - ADA compliant cells and doors
    - 2-3 "cool down" areas
      - Private rooms that can transition people with minor behavior infractions
      - If they need a place to go to cool down after an argument



- Employee needs:
    - More office space for everyone
    - Proper “UA” room
    - Staff meeting room and lounge
    - A better intake building.

The current “shake down shack” does not serve the facility well because  
There is the ability to drop contraband in the grass or dirt between the van and building
  - o Design the Visitor area to face the visitor parking lot.
- Switch the two parking lots and put the entrance to the facility facing the road
- o Make room for responsible routine
    - Inmates are able to construct their own day,  
having space to relax, interact with other inmates and guards, be alone, and come and go  
as they wish upon the grounds
  - o Medical unit with therapy room and nurse room. Equipment for dental, eye exams, and typical visits
  - o General store instead of commissary.  
Inmates would be able to purchase things much like they would from a regular store
  - o More room for vocational training
  - o Treatment rooms
  - o Meeting rooms for inmates to meet with attorneys
3. If a new facility were to be built, what would you want to be included in the yard?
- o More walking paths with lights
  - o Room for dogs to run and play
  - o Larger rec area
  - o Gardens
4. If a new facility were to be built, what aspects of Missouri River Correctional Center would you like to keep?
- o The large grounds
    - Most of the buildings are too old to keep
  - o Rough riders would keep their facility on site
    - New siding possibly
5. Do you have solitary confinement at MRCC?
- No
- o If a new facility were to be built, would you want solitary confinement included within the design?
- No
6. Do you use “open booking” at MRCC
- o All the booking is done at the state penitentiary
  - o Inmates are taken through intake when they arrive on campus from other facilities and when they get back from going into town
7. What do you notice to be the biggest challenge for inmates adjusting to this environment?
- o They have a hard time going from their own space to sharing a room with 15 other men
  - o They don’t like how quiet it is in the man camp units after years of listening to other people all the time


MRCC is laid out in a similar fashion to Bastoy prison in Norway but with a slightly different culture. Like Bastoy, there are separate buildings that house laundry, dining, vocation, and such. Norway is known for its progressive attitude toward corrections while North Dakota is known for being a very conservative state. Although North Dakota is a conservative state, overall, there is a relatively progressive attitude within the correctional system. They have worked to produce a system that heals and rehabilitates inmates instead of punishing them further. Facilities in other states would do well to introduce similar systems.



Bastoy, Norway



Bismarck, North Dakota



To complete the research, interviews were conducted with architects who design secure environments. Secure environments are anything that require extra security, such as mental or behavioral hospitals, juvenile correction centers and adult penitentiaries. The interviews were meant to gain a better understanding of what changes have been happening recently in the world of corrections. Some changes include incorporating more evidence based design which tend to be more humane. Hearing from professionals who work in this environment every day is key to learn about specific decisions behind the architecture. Knowing what is typically considered while designing a secure environment will further inform the direction of corrections.

The architects at BWBR were able to talk about real projects they have worked on and also some they have not worked on but have heard about. The interviews created a better understanding of what is happening in other parts of the nation and around the Midwest. A lot of correctional centers are being built for different security levels to account for the high volume of incarcerated individuals. The architects discussed their hopes for the future of correctional design, each one stated that they would like to see even more of a shift to focus on rehabilitation rather than retribution. Todd Warren, Senior Project architect at BWBR stated that he hoped the future would bring smaller, nicer facilities at a lower security level. Meaning there would be less of a need for high security facilities in the US. There is already a trend moving in that direction but there hasn't been enough of a shift to notice the changes nationwide.

Each architect was asked the same questions and given time to answer them privately. This was to ensure that all given answers were truly their own. There was no time constraint so they were able to talk freely for as long or as little as they wanted. Every person gave a variety of answers, as such, some overlapped and some were completely unique.



## Interview Questions: (Melanie Schramm Baumhover)

1. How long have you held your current job title?
  - o Project manager for 9 years
  - o Employee at BWBR for 19 years
2. How many secure environment projects have you worked on?
  - o About 12
3. What is the biggest challenge you face when designing secure environments?
  - o Public perception
    - People have ideas about how inmates should be treated
    - It still needs to be durable and humane
  - o Think about how much time the staff must spend there
    - There should be good sight lines
    - Good lighting
    - Safe
  - o If the staff is safe, inmates are safe
  - o Budget challenges
  - o Balancing what the perception is vs. what is actually needed
4. What are some of the things you consider when designing a correctional facility?
  - o Where is the security boundary in the facility
    - Some places don't have walls or fences so you need to know how much freedom the inmates have.
  - o How are they moving people through the facility
    - Where are they going and what are they doing and how are they getting there
  - o Understanding how the facility is going to operate
  - o Is it going to be dorm style or single or double rooms
    - Dorm style is the cheapest
    - But it is not natural or good for rehabilitation
    - No one wants to share rooms but it goes back to the cost of everything
  - o Do they have public or private toilets

### Interview Questions: (Melanie Schramm Baumhover)

5. What are your hopes for the future of correctional design?
  - o A lot more facilities are looking for humane ways to treat inmates
    - Continue on the path of more respect for inmates lives
  - o Most people will be released so how they are treated in prison will affect the way they behave on the outside
  
6. What do you think about including Solitary Housing Units within a prison?
  - o In some cases, they are necessary
  - o Some places have changed the way they deal with it and send less people there and for less time
  - o Some people need time away from others and it is helpful
  - o Including less SHU beds changes the way programs are run
  - o One downfall is they might harm others just to get the privacy
  
7. What do you think about the policy changes MRCC has made to mirror what is happening in Norway?
  - o It is a very positive change
    - The people who are there are there as punishment. It is not the staffs job of the job of the architect to punish people further
  - o It has created a positive change
  - o It encourages good behavior

## Interview Questions: Architect (Todd Warren)

1. How long have you held your current job title?
  - o About 17 years
2. How many secure environment projects have you worked on?
  - o About 13
3. What do you think about the idea of giving prisoners technology to use as aids in their rehabilitation?
  - o I think it's a good idea.
  - o Some facilities have iPad for inmates to use either for GED or training to get a job after
    - They need to keep up with what is happening in society
4. What is the biggest challenge you face when designing secure environments?
  - o Funding or budget
    - There are always things that are needed that can't happen
    - People don't see it as valuable to spend money on this kind of thing
5. What are some of the things you consider when designing a correctional facility?
  - o Staff safety
  - o Inmate safety
    - Not allowing them into places they shouldn't be
  - o ACA standards and codes
    - If there is a fire you can't just let people go
    - there must be steps put into place to cover everything
6. Do you tend to design for humanity?
  - o The biggest thing that people understand is taking care of the staff.
  - o People will understand that first and it will impact the outcome
    - Inmates come and go but the staff can be there for 30 or 40 years
  - o Trying to make the space more normative so they have a better chance when they get out.
    - 98% of these people are going to get out so it is important to treat them well
    - People tend to behave better in nicer environments
    - If they have access to natural sunlight and a little more freedom and a little nicer facility, they tend to do better and act better.
      - Group therapy and classes or work helps them get on track
  - o Consider the staff when designing so we can retain the staff with less turnover.
    - It is a hard job that not many people are willing to do

## Interview Questions: Architect (Todd Warren)

7. What are your hopes for the future of correctional design?
  - o Keeps going toward better facilities
  - o Better, nicer, and more valued
    - People need to realize that there should be services for the people living there.
    - They should have programs to finish school
  - o When you spend time in these places you see how much it is needed.
  - o We can't keep building our way out of the issues
  - o Smaller nicer facilities that aren't so harsh.
    - More medium and minimum custody with better chances of rehabilitation
  
8. What do you think about including Solitary Housing Units within a prison?
  - o It's not that simple. They are needed in some facilities.
  - o It is necessary to have them but there could be less of them and used less
    - There could be a higher bar of what gets people put into solitary
    - Some people need to be there and are put there for a reason
  - o Is it encouraging bad behavior if they need time away from their roommate they will do what it takes to be put into SHU
    - If there is a lack of incentive it could cause people to assault someone or do something that will get them put in SHU
  
9. What do you think about the policy changes MRCC has made to mirror what is happening in Norway?
  - o There seems to be a lot of positives in what is happening in Norway
  - o They have more control over their own lives and their outcomes
  - o Curious to see how it would work in the US
  - o There is less diversity in Norway so does that make a difference in how things work
  - o It could be a good thing but there will always need to be a MAX
    - But there could be more medium security
  - o Americans tend to be very judgmental about what inmates are given
    - They believe they deserve things that are not as nice

# RESULTS



After researching several examples of correctional centers that were designed to rehabilitate individuals, the realization was made that there are a few specific features most centers have in common. Every element is included for the purpose of creating a healing space that will help end the cycle of incarceration. Not only does it humanize the space, but it moves toward a realistic transition into society.



# LARGE GROUNDS

According to Help Guide.org “exercise is one of the most effective ways to improve your mental health. Regular exercise can have a profoundly positive impact on depression, anxiety, ADHD, and more. It also relieves stress, improves memory, helps you sleep better, and boosts overall mood” (Robinson, Segal and Smith, 2017). It was discovered in 2006 that 56 percent of state prisoners have symptoms of serious mental illnesses. By designing spaces to include larger recreation areas, we give inmates the tools to better themselves. Sports can be used not only as a way to blow off steam but also as a team building exercise or learning tool.

Some low security prisons allow inmates to move about the space by themselves, even allowing them outside in the recreation area for more than an hour at a time. Walking is some of the best low impact exercise a person can get. Utilizing the large grounds does not have to only include exercise. Being outside, close to nature is said to calm individuals and help boost their immune system. Relaxing outside in the sun can be some of the most peaceful moments of the day.

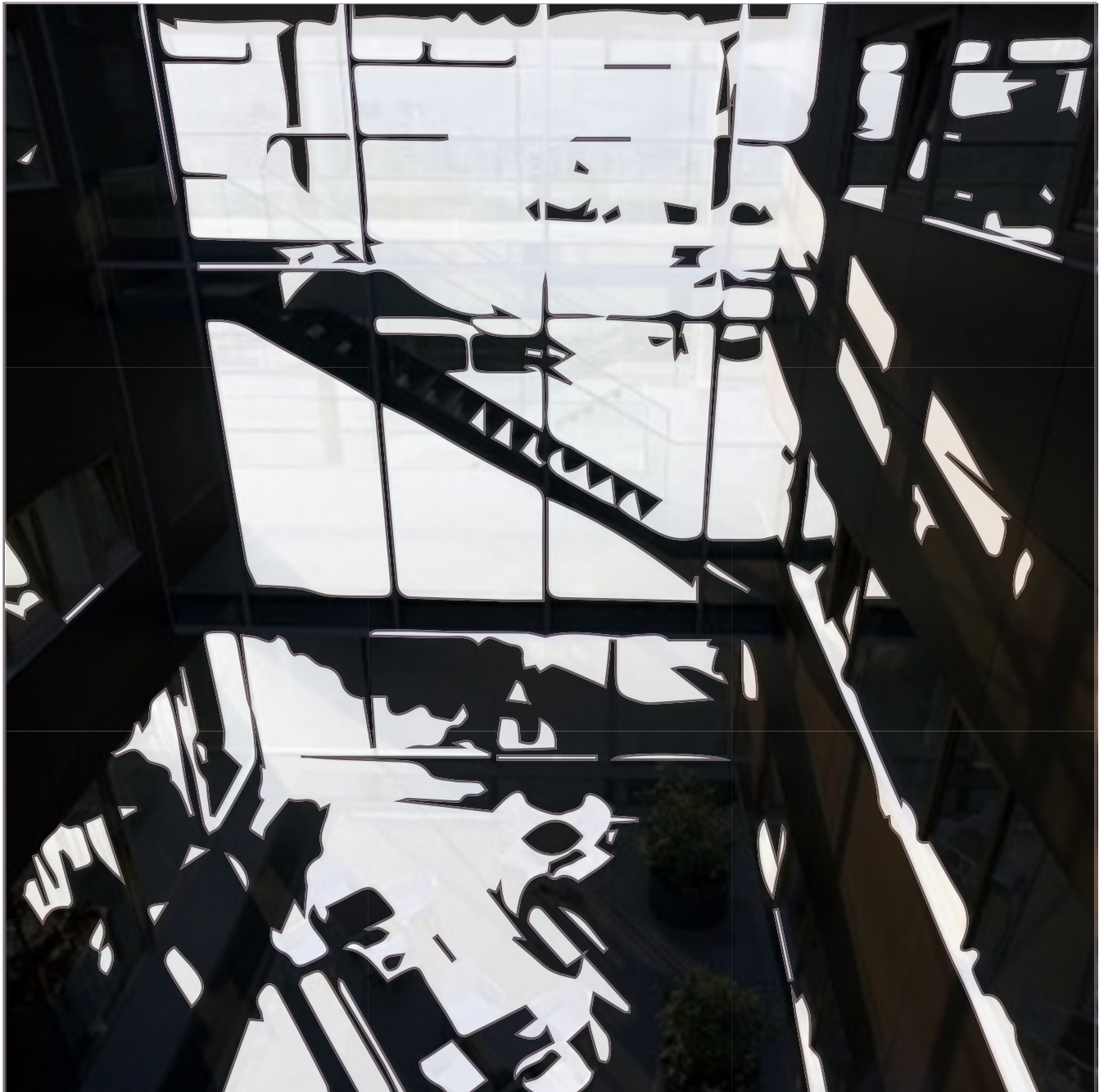
# ACCESS TO NATURE

Access to nature can create a serene experience. Typical prisons allow inmates very little time outdoors and the time they do spend outside is commonly surrounded by a fence with the only nature being grass and maybe a few shrubs. While some prisons can do nothing about the minuscule access to nature, there are always ways of improving the situation. A study published in *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, showed that even images of nature create a greater sense of calm in inmates. (Nadkrani, Hasbach, Thys, Crockett, and Schnacker, 2017) By adding nature imagery in places that everyone has access to, it naturally creates a calm atmosphere.

Many prisons in America are built in rural areas or away from large cities. This is intended to increase safety and security but also because rural land is typically cheaper than urban areas. One positive to placing prisons in rural areas is that they have a lot of room to utilize. If the grounds of prisons were planted with trees, flowers, and other vegetation the culture of the place would shift.



# AN ABUNDANCE OF NATURAL LIGHT



Sunlight is said to improve people's overall mood. "Exposure to sunlight is thought to increase the brain's release of a hormone called serotonin. This is associated with boosting mood and helping a person feel calm and focused. Without enough sunlight exposure, a person's serotonin levels can dip low. Low levels of serotonin are associated with a higher risk of seasonal affective disorder (SAD). SAD is a form of depression that is triggered by changing seasons" (Avery, 2017). Due to the fact that we live in the northern hemisphere which gets less than 10 hours of sunlight per day in the winter SAD is more prominent. Having access to sunlight is all the more important in climates that experience long winters. With a natural mood booster, it is less likely that fights or disruptions will occur.



# NORMATIVE.

## American adjective

1. of or establishing a norm, or standard
2. having to do with usage norms

The biggest change from prisons designed for retributive justice to reformative justice is the way inmates are detained. Retributive justice is the idea that justice will be served by those who commit crimes. There is little room for rehabilitation in the world of retributive justice. Reformative justice on the other hand works hard to rehabilitate individuals who end up in prison. It is based on the thought that proper rehabilitation will end the cycle of incarceration.

Some facilities that were researched have both single and double bed dorms but none have cells. Jail cells are often associated with life in prison, they are almost always the first thing that is pictured when thinking about incarceration. In order to rehabilitate individuals, it is important to introduce them to a world that is similar to the one they will experience when they are released.

When talking with the guards at MRCC, they stated that the decision to add single bed rooms in addition to the multi bed dorms was made in order to get people ready for the world outside of prison. They discussed the fact that it is not normal to live in a cell with no privacy or freedom. It is understood that everyone who is given the right to their own space in a single bed dorm will be responsible for keeping it clean. The goal is that they will learn why responsibility and accountability is so important.

The DoC employees talked a lot about the importance of “normative experiences”, this is the idea that inmates should experience a life that mirrors life outside of prison. Giving inmates responsibility for their own space introduces them to the kind of things they will encounter later. There are ways that the architecture can support these changes and will make for a very successful future.





# CONCLUSION



The most prominent conclusion that came through this research proved that the situations inmates are put in directly affect the way they act during their incarceration and even after they are released. More humane prisons change things such as the rate of violence in prisons and the rate of recidivism. To put it simply, the better the facility, the better the outcome. There will always be an exception to the rule but for the most part this is proven to be true. A women's detention facility in San Diego made drastic changes to the architecture and landscape of the prison and immediately saw positive results. There was less violence between inmates and between guards and inmates. It should not come as a surprise that the architecture of a space effects those who inhabit it.

There is a lot more we could be doing on both the state and federal level to decrease the rate of recidivism. The changes need to start from within the prison system. Part of the solution should be to increase the amenities for inmates who prove they deserve it through good behavior. Amenities can be things as simple as better housing situations that have larger windows and a view of nature. As previously discussed, inmates who are granted more access to sunlight, nature, and room to move, are generally healthier, both physically and psychologically. Each of these things is a basic human right and should not be considered the only award for good behavior. Instead they should be awarded with extra opportunities for education and vocation. Preparing them for a life after prison is the best way to reduce the rate of recidivism. Give them the tools to succeed and they will do just that.



Most of these people have probably had little opportunity for success in their lifetime and just need a chance to prove themselves. Simple things like allowing them to schedule their own days can do a great deal for their confidence and self-worth. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways. A lot of prisons are designed as one building that is sectioned off for different uses. There has been a lot of success in low security facilities that are designed in a campus style layout with totally separate buildings. Typically, people have to leave their house to go to work, school or the gym which begs the question, why should this be any different in prison? A campus style facility forces people to live a life that is similar to what is experienced everyday by the general public.

Retributive justice would never allow these changes to happen, however, with the changes in our penal system we see a change in the way prisons are run. Reformative justice focuses on the needs of the inmate, security will always come first but reform should be a close second. By following the lead of Scandinavian prisons, America could decrease individuals who end up in the revolving door that is currently our correctional system.

It has always been that the majority of prisons are designed prior to a policy being put in place, and after that is filled with inmates. It is practically unheard of to design a prison based on the policies that are already in place or to design a facility that responds directly to the need of inmates. If this shift in thought were to occur, the entire future of corrections could change.

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