

Ohio

Department of Rehabilitation & Correction

Mike DeWine, Governor

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Office of the Chief Inspector

Chris Lambert, Chief Inspector

Roger Wilson, Deputy Chief Inspector

Butch Hunyadi, Assistant Chief Inspector

Antonio Lee, Assistant Chief Inspector

Kelly Riehle, Assistant Chief Inspector

Marc Bratton, Assistant Chief Inspector

Karen Stanforth, Assistant Chief Inspector

Suzanne Evans, Correctional Grievance Officer

Inmate Grievance Procedure Annual Report for 2019
September 2020

Authority

The Office of the Chief Inspector, in accordance with Administrative Rule 5120-9-30, has the authority to administer all aspects of the grievance process for the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC). Administrative Rule 5120-9-31 outlines the grievance procedure and the requirements associated with its use.

This report, as required by Administrative Rule 5120-9-30 (12), provides descriptive statistical information related to the grievance procedure primarily during 2019, while also providing some basic descriptive trend comparisons for the last 5 complete calendar years (2015 to 2019).

Inmate Grievance Procedure Transition

Calendar year 2019 represents the second full year of ODRC's automated inmate grievance procedure. The 2019 data demonstrates a continuation of a trend seen in 2018 with increased use of the grievance procedure following the implementation of the electronic system. When compared to the system when driven by paper, automation has created increased opportunities for the inmate population to peacefully, efficiently and productively voice concerns and seek assistance from staff.

Inmate Grievance Procedure

The grievance procedure is a three-step process that begins with the filing of an Informal Complaint Resolution (ICR) to the supervisor of the area where the inmate has a concern. For example, a complaint would be issued to a Food Service Manager for concerns related to food quality. If an inmate is not satisfied with the response rendered in the ICR, the inmate may file a grievance to the Inspector of Institutional Services.

Once a grievance is filed, the Inspector of Institutional Services conducts a thorough investigation into the matter and will determine if any policy, rule, or procedural guideline was violated. The Inspector renders a decision of denied or granted. In some cases, the complaint may be considered non-grievable for not meeting the requirements of AR 5120-9-31 or the inmate may withdraw the complaint. If an inmate is not satisfied with the decision by the inspector, an appeal may be filed to the Office of the Chief Inspector for review by an assigned Assistant Chief Inspector where the decision is considered final.

Inmates may also file grievances directly to the Chief Inspector in instances where they believe the Warden or Inspector of Institutional Services was personally and knowingly involved in a violation of law, rule or policy, or condoned such a violation.

Inmate Grievance Procedure Descriptive Trend Information

Table 1 displays the aggregate agency informal complaint resolutions, grievances, appeals, and direct grievances from 2015 to 2019.

All data provided for 2019 is obtained from the automated grievance procedure application (in use at 26 of 28 prisons) and the agency's Departmental Offender Tracking System (DOTS) Portal data warehouse (in use at OSP and SOCF). The automated grievance procedure application was implemented at different time points at different prisons throughout 2017. All data from 2017 and beyond reflect a combination of both the automated grievance procedure application and the DOTS Portal data warehouse. All data prior to 2017 is obtained from the DOTS Portal data warehouse.

The adoption of the new system, which can be accessed by inmates at kiosks located throughout the facilities, generated a significant increase in filings at all three levels of the inmate grievance procedure. ODRC currently has 797 kiosks available for inmate use.

Administrative Rule 5120-9-31 (12) requires the annual report to provide the status of all pending grievances. Because the data was captured after the exhaustion of all timeframes related to the grievance procedure, there are no pending grievances for 2019.

Table 1. Informal Complaint Resolutions, Grievances, Direct Grievances, and Appeals Filed, 2015-2019

Filing Type	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Informal Complaint Resolutions	36468	35799	41233	62309	64395
Grievances	5518	5323	8227	17874	20041
Appeals	2332	2226	3538	7772	8750
Direct Grievances	451	437	1824	3422	2913

Inmate Grievance Procedure Descriptive Statistics for Calendar Year 2019

Table 2 provides a graph of informal complaints, grievances, and appeals in 2019 expressed in rates per 1,000 inmates by institution. The use of rates is a conventional method that is appropriate when comparing groups (i.e., prisons) with different sized populations.

Please find Table 2 below on page 4 of this report.

Table 3 surrounds the grievance subject area. This table also illustrates the percent of grievances granted by each particular subject area for all grievances filed in 2019.

Please find Table 3 below on page 5 of this report.

Table 2. Grievance Procedure Rates per 1,000 Inmates, 2019.

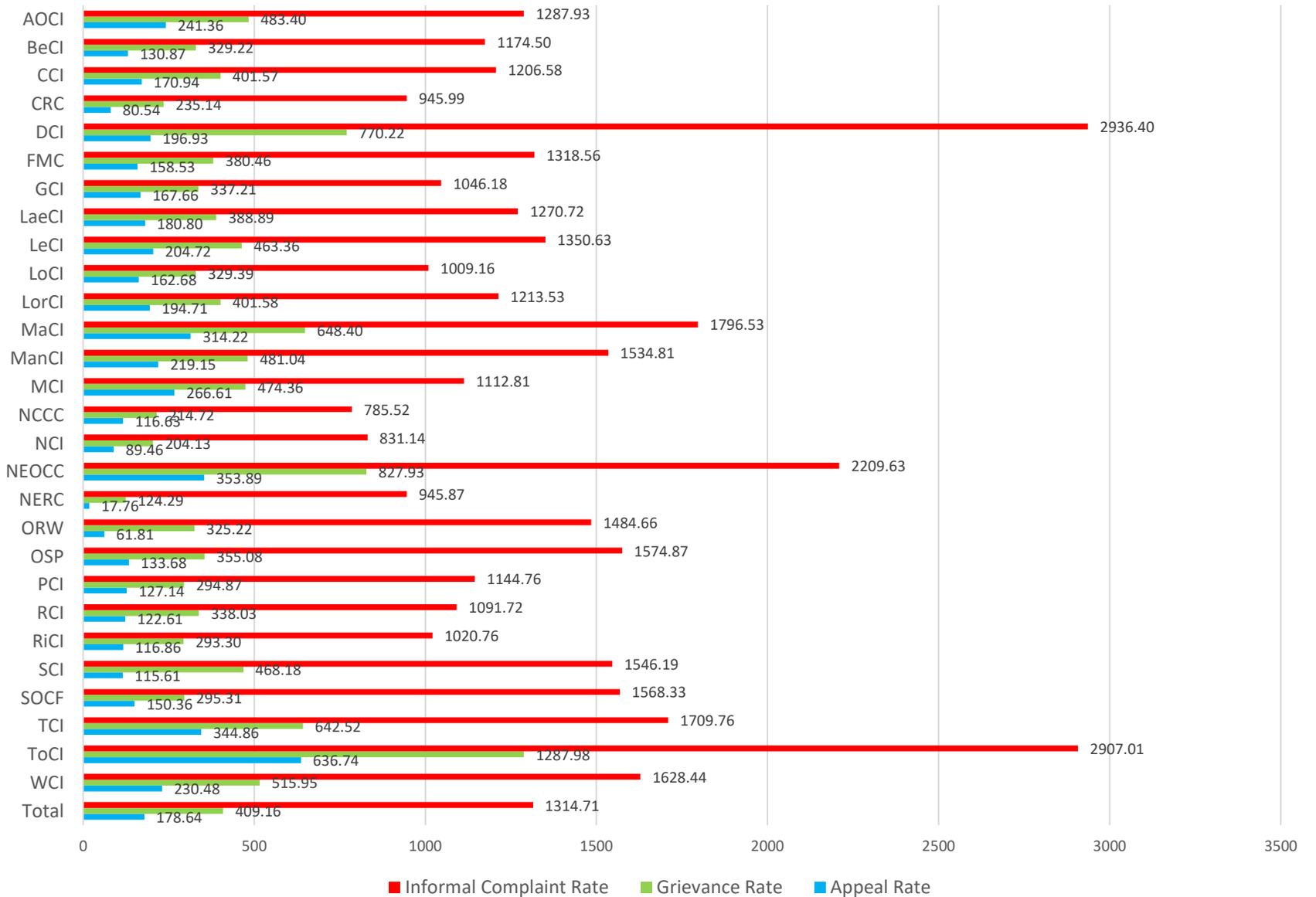


Table 3. Grievance Subject Area by Percent of Grievances Granted, 2019

Grievance Subject Area	n	Percent Granted
Administration	867	3.8
Business Office	126	7.1
Cashiers Office	860	7.1
Classification	235	4.7
Commissary	328	11.0
Communication	224	0.9
Drug Testing	164	3.7
Education/Vocational	254	7.5
Food Service	1038	9.8
Healthcare	2023	3.4
Inmate Groups	23	8.7
Inmate Programs	44	9.1
Inspector of Institutional Services	6	0.0
Laundry/Quartermaster	246	13.4
Legal Services	14	0.0
Library Services	333	5.1
Mail/Package	2101	7.1
Maintenance	175	9.7
Mental Health Services	246	3.3
Non-Grievable Matters	17	0.0
PREA/Sexual Harassment	223	0.0
Property	1950	16.2
Recovery Services	66	3.0
Recreation	134	5.2
Religious Services	165	6.1
Sanitation	134	5.2
Security	2421	5.7
Security Threat Groups	75	1.3
Special Management Housing	278	5.4
Supervision	902	7.9
Unit Management	3288	7.2
Use of Force	365	4.1
Visitation	249	6.4
Warden	467	1.3
Total	20041	7.1