
Survey Report



Analysis of 2022 MQPL Survey Comments

**Top issues reported by
respondents at East Moline
Correctional Center**

East Moline Correctional Center

East Moline Correctional Center is a minimum-security male prison within the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) that housed 449 people on June 29, 2022. The John Howard Association of Illinois (JHA) conducted a modified short [Measuring the Quality of Prison Life](#) (MQPL) survey by providing enough survey packets (consisting of the [MQPL survey](#), an informed consent notice/instruction sheet, and a privileged mail prepaid business reply envelope addressed to JHA) so that every person incarcerated at East Moline had an opportunity to participate in the voluntary and anonymous survey if they chose to do so. JHA received 131 responses to the MQPL survey from people at East Moline through the end of 2022, representing approximately 29.2% of the static population. JHA also conducted a monitoring visit of the prison close in time to survey distribution.

This report highlights some of the most common issues raised in response to our MQPL survey question **"What are the most negative things about life in this prison?"** We selected this question to analyze because it is where most survey respondents chose to report the issues that they were experiencing while incarcerated. All survey comments for East Moline can be found in our [2022 MQPL Survey Comments](#) report. Quantitative survey results for East Moline can be found in our [2022 MQPL Survey Results](#) report.

Methodology

To identify the most common issues, we identified the most common words people used in response to the question "What are the most negative things about life in this prison?" For the Top Ten Words, all instances of each word and its plural form were counted (e.g., "program" and "programs.") Hyphenated words were counted as one word. Words like "the" and "not" were filtered from the analysis. Then, indicator words were counted under seven issue categories to determine top issues in each facility's survey responses. When an indicator word appeared within a longer word, the longer word was included. For example: the indicator word, "medic," picked up both "medical" and "medication." Prior to the issue analysis, the language in each report was standardized so that indicator words consistently appeared in a form that would be picked up by our software (e.g. "CO" was changed to "C/O," "good time" was changed to "good-time"). The indicator words by issue can be found [here](#).

To avoid double-counting issues, issue categories were only counted once per response. This means that the response "the cells are cold and dirty" would count as raising only one issue related to conditions, even though two indicator words ("cold" and "dirty") are used in the response.

There are limitations with this method, such as sentiment analysis. For example we are unable to distinguish statements such as "The doctor is good" and "I haven't seen a doctor." However, it is reasonable to conclude that instances of "doctor" are in a negative context in response to the question. Additionally, some indicator words that were frequently applied to multiple issue categories were removed. For example, we did not include "job" under productive activity because we could not distinguish statements relevant to the issue area, like "I can't get a job," from statements relevant to other issue areas, like "Staff don't do their jobs." Nor did we include "cell" under movement, e.g. "I am in my cell 24/7," because we could not distinguish from "School is always cancelled" or "The cells are too small" under this method of counting.

This report includes quotes from survey responses that we found to be either representative of the diversity of issues raised for each category or particularly insightful. Some quotes have been abbreviated to highlight the relevant issue.

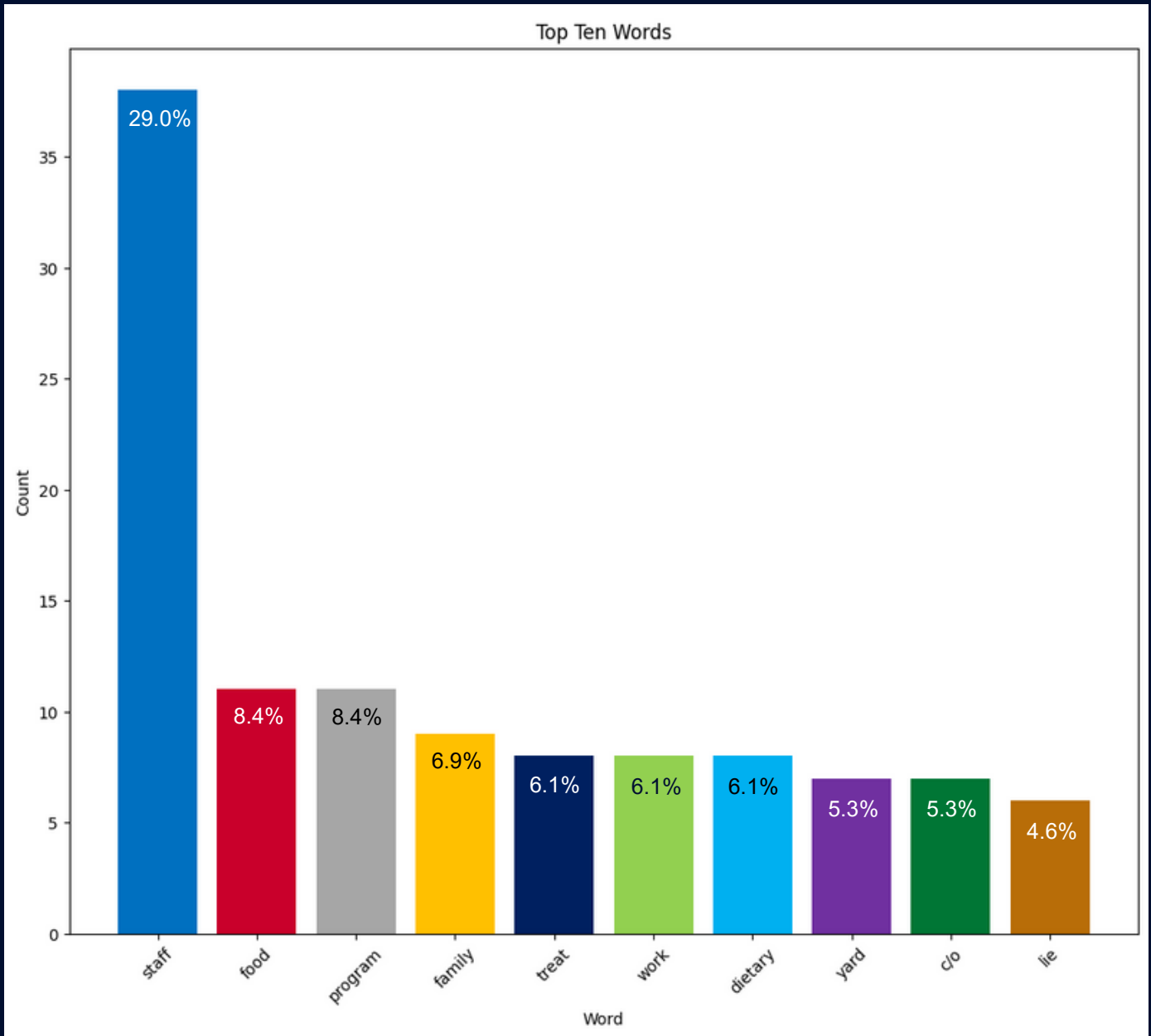
Word Cloud



Word cloud generated using the most common words used in East Moline survey responses to the question "What are the most negative things about life in this prison?"

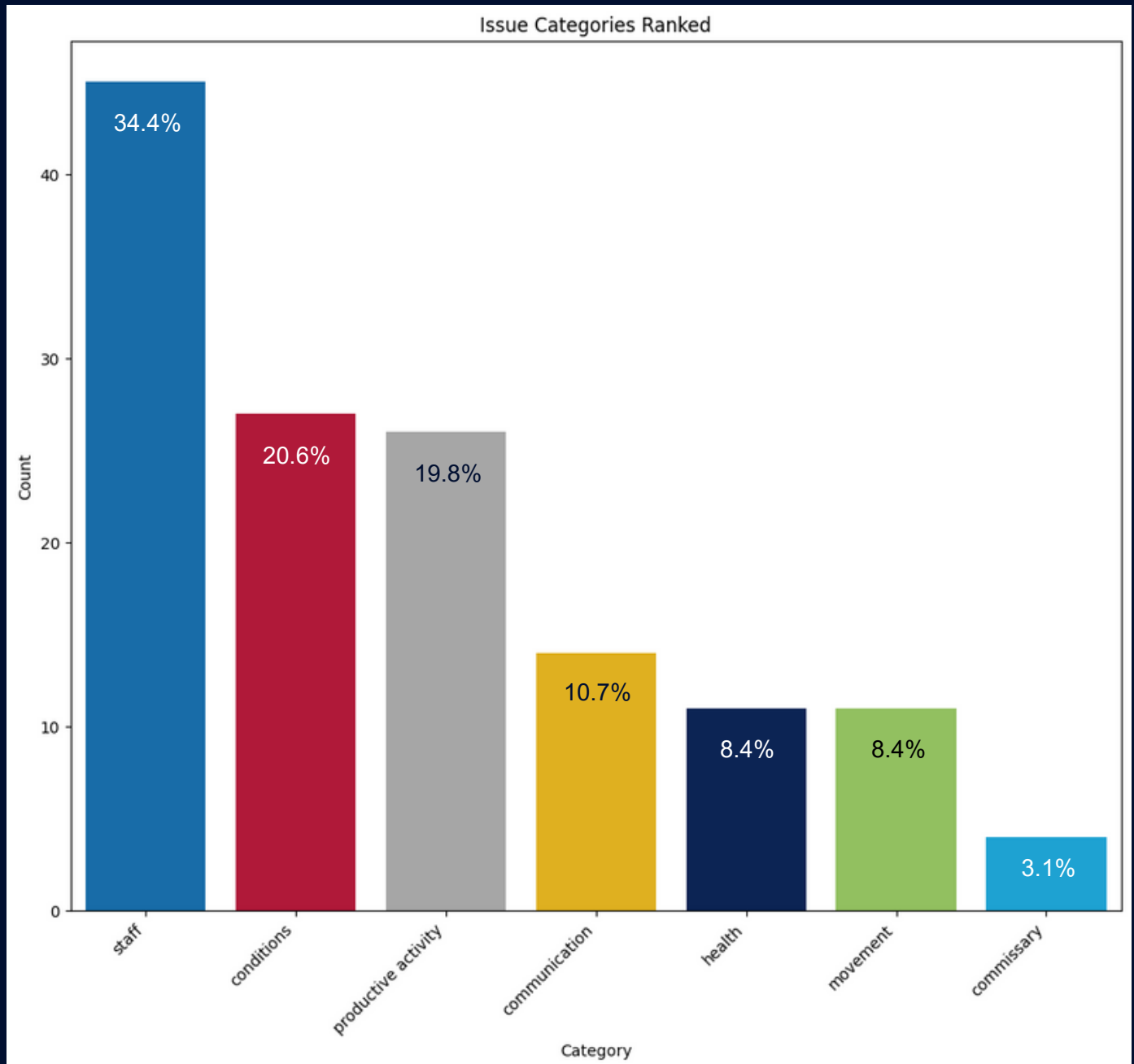
Top 10 Indicator Words

Used in responses to "What are the most negative things about life in this prison?"
Percentages are of the survey responses in which the word appeared.



Issue Categories Ranked by Prevalence

Issue rankings are determined by indicator word frequency. Common words used in survey responses have been sorted into seven issue categories. When a survey response uses one of a category's indicator words, it is tallied as raising an issue in that category. For example, a survey with the words "medical," "nurse," or "infection" is tallied as raising an issue related to health. Survey responses may include more than one issue. Percentages are of the survey responses in which an issue was raised.



Selected direct quotes from East Moline survey responses

1

STAFF

Encompasses issues related to prison staff, such as lack of staff or staff conduct.

Not enough staff so inmates can utilize programs to better ourselves for release.

Counselors and staff supervisors are not very helpful when you ask an important question about certain things.

THE STAFF HAS NO RESPECT FOR YOU AND TREAT YOU LIKE TRASH CAUSE UR INCARCERATED

Here at East Moline staff treats incarcerated individuals like less than people. They lie and never explain their reasons even if you ask a direct and clear question,

Staff put your safety at risk, then when you have to fight, you get blamed

2

CONDITIONS

Encompasses issues related to living conditions, such as food, water, temperature, and sanitation.

The heat and hot water doesn't work in the winter, and the heat blows out of the vents in spring and summer and the hot water goes in and out causing it to burn you.

Something is always malfunctioning (i.e. heat, A/C, hot water)

THE BUILDINGS ARE NOT AIR CONDITIONED AND FALLING APART. SURROUNDED BY BUILDINGS THAT ARE CONDEMNED. FACILITY IS OUTDATED AND SHOULD BE CLOSED - CANT PROVIDE PROPER FOOD MILK OR EDUCATION

Some cells are molded. We're allowed one cup of ice a day in the summer time and the building has no AC.

The dietary has rats and roaches—there's not enough food in trays. The washers and dryers stay broke. Black mold everywhere.

3

PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITY

includes issues related to productive activities, such as work assignments, education, or programming.

The lack of vocational courses, no way to earn GEDs.

There is no substance abuse programs.

They try to put those with less time into programs AND put those with time on the waiting list

They won't give certain jobs of higher pay, or certain educational opportunities based on offense and not the individual

There are no programs for substance abuse, especially allowing EPSC. Having high TABE scores actually hurts you here.

4

COMMUNICATIONS

Includes issues related to phone availability, visitation, mail, and other means of communication.

Not enough phones.

Phones are controlled by incarcerated individuals,

No phone list! We NEED phone lists here because the gangs are running the phones in a cycle where it's only them taking turns on it, no one else! No air conditioning, not enough yards/gyms & the great time delay in getting us our money / ~~at~~ money slips when it never takes this long anywhere else that I've been. The fans they're now selling are useless & commissary is NEVER stocked!

Gangs are allowed to control the phones.

Missing out on contact with people.

5

HEALTH

Includes issues related to healthcare, mental health services, and COVID-19 concerns.

Medical care is non-existent, and medical staff treat us like animals.

Horrible healthcare, very mean nurses.

TREATMENT BY STAFF & HEALTHCARE
NOT ENOUGH PROGRAMS
SENSE OF HOPELESSNESS

Our healthcare is horrible.

I can't get medications I need for pain I'm totally disabled. They won't let me.

6

MOVEMENT

Includes concerns about time spent out of the cell or sleeping area and yard/dayroom availability.

It's a minimum and we only get 1 yard, 6 days a week. We feel as if we are in a medium max! In the summer we are supposed to get 1 day and 1 night yard everyday in a minimum camp, and we do not here.

Yard is too limited with quality and quantity of weights.

There is nothing to do little time given to yard
most have three yards a day in summer how you
may get 1 hour over a day not days of yard

Very little movement.

The dayroom hours for this level prison is not adequate enough.

The commissary here is horrible, our items change or run out almost every week. There is no price list here because items change so rapidly! The hygiene items are restricted to very few items that run out constantly it is a huge problem here.

The fans they're now selling are useless and commissary is NEVER stocked!

Not enough Fans at store

Commissary never has a stock of shoes, clothes, electronics.



This report was written by JHA staff. Media inquiries should be directed to JHA's Executive Director Jennifer Vollen-Katz at jvollen@thejha.org or 312-291-9183.

Incarcerated individuals can send privileged mail to report concerns and issues to the John Howard Association, P.O. Box 10042, Chicago, IL 60610-0042. JHA staff read every letter and track this information to monitor what is occurring behind prison walls and to advocate for humane policies and practices. Family and friends can contact JHA via our website www.thejha.org or by leaving us a voicemail at (312) 291-9183.

Since 1901, JHA has provided public oversight of Illinois' juvenile and adult correctional facilities. Every year, JHA staff and trained volunteers inspect prisons, jails, and detention centers throughout the state. Based on these inspections, JHA regularly issues reports that are instrumental in improving prison conditions. JHA humbly thanks everyone who graciously shared their experiences and insights with us.



Defying Injustice. Defending Humanity.