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Nebraska Officials Looking to Ease Prison Overcrowding

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) - Nebraska's top office-holders are looking at ways to reduce crowding in the state prison system.

Officials from all three branches of state government met in Lincoln on Wednesday to hear from the Council of State Governments, a national group that works with states to develop policy.

Marc Pelka, a program director for the group, says Nebraska's prison crowding is driven by a combination of factors. Last year, 41 percent of the inmates admitted to a Nebraska prison were convicted of low-level felonies and misdemeanors. Most of those convictions were for non-violent crimes.

Pelka also says many sentences don't allow much time for post-release supervision, which leads some former prisoners to reoffend.

Nebraska's prisons were operating at 157 percent of their total design capacity as of September 30th.

Associated Press