

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



D.C. Department of Corrections Response
to
Washington Lawyers' Committee White Paper

The Washington Lawyers' Committee commissioned Covington and Burling to prepare a white paper regarding conditions of confinement at the D.C. Jail and CTF to include physical infrastructure, mental health, suicide prevention, drug treatment practices, juvenile unit, demographics, budget/costs and contracting. The Department of Corrections provides the following comments in response to this report.

CDF and CTF Facilities

- DOC is committed to performing preventative and day to day maintenance of the CDF and CTF facilities in order to provide a clean and safe environment for staff and inmates.
- DOH noted in its exit interview with DOC staff on March 16, 2015 that there had been noticeable improvements in the facility, and areas that were in need of repair and in poor condition during the initial inspection have improved significantly.
- In the most recent March 2015 DOH inspection, 87% of the identified items have already been abated to date; the remaining items are either currently being corrected or, due to the age and deterioration of the physical structure, are outside of DOC's control.

Juvenile Programs

- Since the issuance of the Ridley Report, DCDOC has significantly expanded the juvenile program.
 - The after school program has been expanded and now runs from Monday-Friday. This program focuses on reinforcing the day's lessons, teaching good citizenship and pro-social development.
 - There is a daily barbering program for the male juveniles.
 - There is a comprehensive Victim Impact Training program that combines intensive recovery support, mentoring and anger management services, and workforce development skills.
 - Other weekly programs include: Life Skills workshops, Free Minds Book Club, Adjusting Our Attitudes and substance abuse education.
- The Juvenile Unit program manager is currently in the process of negotiating a career and technical training for weekend programming.
- As of September 2014, all correctional officer recruits are trained in Positive Youth Development (PYD), as well as the operational and disciplinary procedures of the

Juvenile Unit. This training is being phased into the annual in-service training for all correctional staff.

- PYD emphasizes building skills and assets in youth in addition to preventing negative outcomes.

Juvenile Administrative Segregation

The DOC does not use excessive isolation and segregation with the juvenile population. The number of juveniles segregated (either awaiting a disciplinary hearing or placed in administrative segregation) over the past year are as follows with the average stay in segregation being approximately two (2) days:

Month	Number of juveniles
May 2014	Six (6)
June 2014	Zero (0)
July 2014	Three (3)
August 2014	Three (3)
September 2014	Two (2)
October 2014	Six (6)
November 2014	Two (2)
December 2014	Zero (0)
January 2015	Zero (0)
February 2015	Zero (0)
March 2015	Five (5)
April 2015	Two (2)
May 2015	Zero (0)

- The DOC has had Juvenile Administrative Housing and Hearing Procedures in place since June 2013.
- Any juvenile placed in administrative segregation is housed in a separate cell on the lower tier within the juvenile unit.
 - These juveniles attend school through DCPS and have access to legal services, programming, counseling services, and meaningful contact with the other juvenile inmates.
- If a juvenile is placed in administrative segregation, the following occurs:
 - Officers are required to do a visual security check of the juvenile every fifteen (15) minutes.
 - The juvenile receives individual recreation for two (2) hours per day.
 - Juveniles will not be placed in segregation for longer than five (5) days unless extenuating circumstances exist.

Visitation for Juveniles

- In addition to video visitation, juveniles who have reached the Gold Tier in the Juvenile Unit are given contact visitation with their parent or guardian once per month. Eligibility for the Gold Tier is based on several factors such as behavior, program participation and educational factors.
- There are currently eight (8) juveniles on the Gold Tier with two (2) more expected by May 7.
- Juvenile inmates are given contact visits during the holiday season in December.

Suicide Prevention

The DOC, through a proactive initiative, requested that consultant Lindsay Hayes independently assess current practices and provide any appropriate recommendations relating to suicide prevention policies and procedures within DOC. His recommendations have been implemented.

- As of October 2014, all 40 designated cells have been completed and retrofitted as follows: to decrease ligature points, handles have been removed from toilets and desks, vents are covered with anti-ligature grade mesh, pick-proof, penal-grade caulking has been used in the cells, and doors have been replaced to allow for 2 clear panels that provide enhanced vision into and out of the cells.
- In response to the Hayes Report recommendations relating to suicide precautions, the DOC provides suicide-resistant smocks and blankets; more time out of cells and the provision of more family visits and telephone access is under review.
- “Behavior Management” status was immediately discontinued upon receipt of the Hayes Report. There are now two categories of observation: Suicide Watch for inmates thought to be actively suicidal and Suicide Precaution for inmates who are at risk of suicide, but less acutely compared to inmates on Suicide Watch. Inmates on Suicide Watch are placed in a safe cell on 3rd floor medical and are provided one-to-one constant monitoring by a healthcare professional. Inmates on Suicide Precaution are monitored by officers every fifteen (15) minutes in staggered intervals.
- Suicide Prevention training has been significantly enhanced. All correctional officers, other DOC staff and healthcare vendor staff must undergo four (4) hours annually of Suicide Prevention training. Additionally, DOC brought in national expert Dr. Dean Aufderheide to conduct a full day of training on self-injurious behavior issues which involved inmates with mental health issues as well as those exhibiting “bad behavior.” Correctional officers on the mental health and segregation units, as well as mental health staff participated in this training.
- DOC is in the process of developing a Mental Health Step Down Unit, which seeks to transition stabilized inmates on the Crisis Intervention Unit to a different wing of the same area which would involve enhanced programming, as well as double-bunking as a way to help them fully transition to general population as their functionality improves.

Substance Abuse Treatment Programs

- The Secure Residential Treatment Program (SRTP) is a joint program of CSOSA and the US Parole Commission that is located in the CTF. Eligibility requirements and the content of the program are controlled by those agencies.
- The DOC offers a Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) program to both male and female inmates. The RSAT curriculum is licensed by Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration (APRA), the regulating body for policy for substance abuse prevention, treatment, and recovery services.
 - RSAT is a 30-120 day program that includes services such as: relapse prevention, parenting classes, and life skills.
 - The program is open to volunteers and also accepts referrals and self-reports.
 - Inmates who have violated the terms of their probation and otherwise meet the requirements of the program may also enroll.

Good Time Credits

- The DOC amended the good time credits law in 2010 in order to expand the application of good time credits to allow pretrial detainees, in addition to sentenced misdemeanants, to earn credits for good behavior and for successful participation in an expanded list of programs including rehabilitative programs, work details, and special projects, with or without completion of the program.
- The District's good time credit laws only apply to pretrial and subsequently sentenced misdemeanants. In accordance with the National Capital Revitalization and Self-Government Improvement Act of 1997 (Pub. L. No. 15-33, 11 Stat.712) and D.C. Code § 24-101, inmates charged with felonies and sentenced to more than one (1) year of incarceration are Federal Bureau of Prisons inmates and can only earn good time credits in accordance with federal law and FBOP policies.

WLC Recommendations

As explained above, the DOC has already taken action on several of the Recommendations contained in the WLC Report. In regard to suicide prevention practices mentioned in Recommendation #3, the DOC brought in on its own initiative an independent consultant, Lindsay Hayes, made the report public, and has implemented the recommendations from his report. Inasmuch as Recommendation #3 relates to juvenile confinement, the DOC similarly commissioned the Ridley report and publicized it, and has worked diligently to implement the Ridley recommendations, including a comprehensive Juvenile Administrative Housing and Hearing policy that is currently in place. The review of training for correctional officers tasked with specialized functions such as juvenile custody and suicide prevention contained in Recommendation #4 has been addressed as explained above, and is ongoing. While much progress has been made, the DOC remains committed to improving operations and achieving the status of a benchmark correctional agency.