

Wisconsin Department of Corrections



Fall Stakeholder Newsletter

October 21, 2021

<https://doc.wi.gov/Documents/StakeholderNewsletters/2021%20Fall%20Stakeholder%20Newsletter.pdf>

A Message from Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers

Hello Wisconsinites,

Over the past several decades, we have seen the population in prisons across our state steadily increase along with widening, disproportionate effects on communities of color. Our justice system has put a strain on our communities and our families for too long, at too high a cost to Wisconsin taxpayers. The path forward for our state is through justice reform, and it's time we start investing in people—not prisons.

This newsletter highlights the incredible efforts Secretary Carr and his team have been making to start tackling this issue head-on. They are addressing disparities related to education, training, housing, healthcare and so much more. I am proud of all they have accomplished so far, and excited they will now be providing regular updates to you, our state's valuable stakeholders. There is still a lot of work to be done, but we are excited to share not only what we've accomplished so far in 2021, but also where we're headed.

Thank you for continuing your efforts alongside us as we work towards a more just, equitable and fair state for all.

Tony Evers
Governor

A Message from Wisconsin DOC Secretary Kevin A. Carr

Hello,

I want to take a moment to introduce you all to our first stakeholder newsletter. My name is Kevin A. Carr and I am the Secretary for the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC). Thank you all for your cooperation and patience over these past 18 months while our agency, and many others in the State of Wisconsin, continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic.

We continue to tirelessly work to keep those in our care and our communities safe. We still have a long road ahead of us as it relates to COVID-19. Our agency has been able to maintain a relatively low number of positive cases in our facilities over the last several months and resume most normal operations. This has been accomplished through thoughtful precautions taken against this virus, including regular testing and vaccination.

This bi-annual newsletter goes beyond what is happening related to COVID-19 and is being shared to highlight DOC's accomplishments and goals. I hope it is a useful tool to help keep friends, families and community members in the loop on what's happening throughout the agency. I appreciate your attention and willingness to learn more about our work and I would also invite your feedback and suggestions on how to improve this publication in the future. This can be done by contacting the email box at the bottom of the page.

Thank you and I wish you all continued health.

Kevin A. Carr
DOC Secretary



Contact the Wisconsin Department of Corrections at DOCGeneral@wisconsin.gov



Updates from the Office of the Secretary (OOS)



Office of the Secretary (OOS)

The Office of the Secretary supports the four divisions and is charged with upholding the mission of the Department of Corrections: to protect the public through the constructive management of individuals placed in its charge. OOS is made up of the Office of Legal Counsel (OLC), Office of Public Affairs (OPA), Prison Rape Elimination Act Office (PREA), Research & Policy Unit (R&P), Office of Victim Services and Programs (OVSP), Internal Affairs Office (IAO), Office of Detention Facilities (ODF), the Legislative Advisor and the Reentry Unit.

Highlights related to the Office of the Secretary’s accomplishments over the last six months, current goals and ongoing initiatives:

Office of Public Affairs (OPA)

The Office of Public Affairs is responsible for strategic communication at the Department of Corrections. The office assists in keeping the public informed of relevant DOC activities and serves as the main point of contact for stakeholders and media.

Accomplishments

- OPA held a series of **virtual town halls** with Secretary Carr on various initiatives, including the Earned Release Program (ERP), Violation Response and Revocation, Governor Evers’ Budget Request and Work Release to keep open lines of communication during the pandemic.

Goals and Ongoing Initiatives

- OPA continues to build and strengthen the agency’s social media presence on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook.
- OPA is working to clarify resources for stakeholders, including friends and families of those in DOC’s care, by creating a resource guide and updating DOC’s public website.

Prison Rape Elimination Act Office (PREA)

The DOC PREA office investigates all allegations of sexual abuse and sexual harassment of persons in our care and youth, past and present.

Accomplishments

- The Federal Department of Justice (DOJ) awarded the agency a grant to fund a regional PREA compliance manager, who is tasked with overseeing the facility’s efforts to comply with PREA standards. They are currently in the process of piloting this model in hopes of duplicating it in under-resourced regions.
- PREA provided refresher training to over 100 exiting PREA investigators.

Goals and Ongoing Initiatives

- PREA is resuming audits in September after a year-long-plus hiatus. Audits are conducted to measure compliance with PREA standards and are one tool to ensure agencies and facilities are taking every reasonable effort to prevent, detect and respond to sexual abuse in confinement.
- PREA is in the process of developing biennial all-staff refresher training to be released in the fall of 2021.
- PREA is working to enhance its report and investigation tracking database to eliminate duplicate documentation and increase efficiency.
- PREA is in the process of crafting a PREA Compliance Manager Guide.



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Updates from Central Office (Continued)



Research & Policy Unit (R&P)

The Research and Policy Unit is responsible for leading research and evaluation efforts for the department. This includes working with cross-divisional data analysts to report on client population statistics, developing standards for data measurement and reporting, conducting research on recidivism and other key performance indicators and creating interactive dashboards that make DOC data more easily accessible to the public.

Accomplishments

- R&P expanded recidivism data from one data element to three:
 - Rearrest: following an episode of incarceration with the WI DOC, to be arrested in Wisconsin for a new criminal offense.
 - Reconviction: following an episode of incarceration with the WI DOC, to commit a criminal offense that results in a new sentence to either prison or probation. Recidivism reports prior to 2021 used this reconviction measure as the only measure of recidivism.
 - Reincarceration: following an episode of incarceration with the WI DOC, to be admitted to a Wisconsin prison for either a revocation, a revocation with a new sentence, or a new sentence.
- R&P created interactive Restrictive Housing data dashboards that allow users to examine trends in Restrictive Housing placements.
- Created interactive Month-End Prison Population data dashboards that allow users to view current prison population data.
- Added key metrics to the Strategic Priorities web page to assist in tracking DOC’s progress and success on implementing initiatives.

Goals and Ongoing Initiatives

- R&P continues to work on developing historical Division of Community Corrections data files that will allow for improved reporting on the community supervision population.

Office of Victim Services and Programs (OVSP)

OVSP is committed to addressing the effects of crime and restoring a sense of safety to victims, survivors and communities through a variety of services including information, support and advocacy.

Accomplishments

- In Fiscal Year 2021:
 - OVSP issued 17,770 notifications to keep enrolled victims informed of client and PIOC status changes.
 - OVSP notified 1,975 victims of parole hearings.
 - OVSP assisted 169 individuals in the revocation process.
 - OVSP served 17,223 unique individuals, providing information on persons in DOC’s care, restitution and other DOC services.

Goals and Ongoing Initiatives

- OVSP will continue to send letters and emails to enrolled victims to keep them updated on any status changes to person in DOC’s care or on community supervision.
- OVSP will also continue to offer support for victims throughout the parole and revocation process.



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Updates from Central Office (Continued)



Internal Affairs Office (IAO)

The charge of the IAO is to investigate serious acts of staff and supervisory misconduct and staff-related sexual abuse and sexual harassment misconduct.

Goals and Ongoing Initiatives

- The IAO continues to ensure DOC finds efficient ways of conducting fair, impartial and thorough investigations in the effort to provide swift accountability for those who deserve it and quick relief for those who are found to be innocent.

Office of Detention Facilities (ODF)

The Department of Corrections has statutory responsibility for the regulation and oversight of local detention facilities, including county jails, houses of correction, secure juvenile detention centers, unlocked Huber facilities, and municipal lockups. Through the Office of Detention Facilities, the Department establishes reasonable standards for the design, construction, repair, maintenance, operation and management of these facilities. Regionally located staff conduct annual inspections of each facility, provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions, training to jail staff, and coordinate a variety of efforts to assist sheriffs, administrators, police chiefs and other local officials in the operation and management of their facilities.

Accomplishments

- ODF hired a new Detention Facilities Specialist in May of 2021.
 - This position has statutory oversight of all county jails, county-operated juvenile detention facilities, Huber facilities and municipal lockups located in the Southeast Region. Additionally, this position provides technical assistance, training and conducts incident reviews.
- Every county jail, county-operated juvenile detention facility, Huber facilities and municipal lockup was inspected by ODF in 2020, and all inspections for 2021 are on track to be completed.
- Since March of 2020, ODF has taken the lead with determining the extent of the county jail backlog of persons in our care who were awaiting transfer to DOC for either a new sentence or revocation order. The tracking of the county jail backlog has now become a monthly task that assists the Office of the Secretary with data-driven information for policy-making decisions.

Goals and Ongoing Initiatives

- ODF is continuing its responsibilities with the provision of providing training to our county partners and has partnered with the Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association to provide in-person training to all Jail Administrators in October 2021 in Green Bay, WI.
- ODF is currently working on a conference for all county-operated juvenile detention facility Superintendents in early 2022.



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Updates from Central Office (Continued)



Reentry Unit

The Reentry Unit's ultimate goal is crime reduction, fewer victims, reduced state and local criminal justice costs and, most importantly, safer families and communities.

Accomplishments

- A new correctional job center at Chippewa Valley Correctional Treatment Facility (CVCTF) was opened in January 2021 to help individuals prepare for careers once they reenter the community.
 - This marks the fifth collaboration between Wisconsin's Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and DOC.
- DOC's fourth mobile lab procured to provide training in the field of Computer Numerical Control (CNC) was delivered in February 2021 to Jackson Correctional Institution (JCI). The mobile lab consists of 12 workstations and instruction is contracted through Western Technical College (WTC).

Goals and Ongoing Initiatives

- Reentry is assisting with the implementation of a pilot Windows to Work program at Green Bay Correctional Institution (GBCI).
- Reentry is working to expand Windows to Work to additional maximum-security institutions throughout the state, thanks to additional funding in the Governor's budget.
- Reentry opened a mobile job center at NLCI and an institution-based job center at the Racine Youth Offender Correctional Facility (RYOCF) in September of 2021. An institution-based job center at Robert E. Ellsworth Correctional Center (REECC) was opened in the early spring.
- Reentry is planning to open three additional institution-based job centers by the end of 2021 at the following locations: Jackson Correctional Institution (JCI), Racine Correctional Institution (RCI) and Kettle Moraine Correctional Institution (KMCI).



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Updates from the Division of Adult Institutions (DAI)



Division of Adult Institutions (DAI)

DAI protects the public through the secure and humane treatment of persons in DOC's care.

Accomplishments

- DAI implemented Zoom video visitation for persons in our care (PIOC) while in-person visitation was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- As of October 19, 2021, DAI fully vaccinated 81.7% of PIOC and fully or partially vaccinated 82.8% of PIOC in DAI facilities.
- DAI has continued to test staff in DAI facilities bi-weekly; staff who provide proof of vaccination may opt-out of bi-weekly testing.
- Beginning October 18, 2021, the DOA, in partnership with the DHS, will be implementing a required weekly COVID-19 testing program for all executive branch employees, interns, and contract staff (this includes DAI staff). Staff are exempt from this testing requirement if they are fully vaccinated from COVID-19 and have provided their vaccination status.
- DAI resumed in-person visitation with appropriate precautions in place to maintain the health and safety of staff and PIOC; free video visits continue to be offered.
- DAI is currently offering COVID-19 vaccines to visitors at six (6) facilities.
- DAI is once again allowing volunteers into DAI facilities with appropriate precautions in place.
- Six DAI facilities held educational graduations in 2021:
 - Racine Correctional Institution (21 students)
 - Taycheedah Correctional Institution (36 students)
 - Redgranite Correctional Institution (33 students)
 - Robert E. Ellsworth Correctional Center (31 students)
 - Kettle Moraine Correctional Institution (88 students)
 - Waupun Correctional Institution (20 students)
- DAI implemented policy changes that expanded access to the Earned Release Program (ERP). The largest changes include expanding the program to individuals classified as medium custody, as well as expanding suitability criteria from 36 to 48 months from release.

Goals and Ongoing Initiatives

- Discussions continued among DAI leadership on evidenced-based strategies to safely reduce the use of, and make improvements to the operation of restrictive housing. Suggested changes include providing additional training for staff in de-escalation techniques, increasing the use of alternative sanctions, reviewing resources for facility capital improvements and the evaluation of programmatic needs of PIOC. In 2021, the department will build upon those discussions and work to finalize policy revisions.
- DAI continues to educate and encourage PIOC to receive the COVID-19 vaccinations.
- DAI is working to develop and implement recruitment strategies, such as:
 - The Bureau of Correctional Enterprises (BCE) is using truck wraps to advertise DOC jobs.
 - DOC is developing a mobile recruitment trailer to use around the state and at job or career fairs.
 - DOC has expanded advertising to include Bally Sports commercials, radio spots, and social media posts.
- DAI is undertaking a number of policy reviews to determine the need to update aspects of its operations.
- DAI is working to implement video visitation on a permanent basis in an effort to offer more opportunities for PIOC to visit with friends and family.
- Redgranite Correctional Institution (RGCI) is in the planning phase of implementing a Substance Use Disorder/Earned Release Program with the assistance of the DAI Office of Program Services. This will expand the opportunity to enroll in this program at medium custody facilities.



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Updates from the Division of Community Corrections (DCC)



Division of Community Corrections (DCC)

The mission of the Division of Community Corrections is to enhance public safety through the management and reduction of client risk by providing supervision and collaboration with community partners to assist clients in changing their behavior and repairing the harm they have done.

Accomplishments

- DCC conducted follow-up Evidence-Based Response to Violation (EBRV) training in May 2021 in response to revocation reform.
- DCC held a virtual leadership conference in June 2021, attended by more than 200 staff. The theme was "Paving the way through change during adversity and uncertainty".
- Several of the break-out sessions focused on equity and inclusion.
- Region 3 held training for all regional staff on racial equity and intersectionality in the spring of 2021.
- DCC maintained contact with clients via virtual platforms during the pandemic.
- DCC hired a Clinical Supervisor in the spring of 2021 to assist with the implementation of a new treatment unit in DCC, which will include Regional Treatment Specialists across the state.
- In response to the overdose and opioid crisis, an Overdose Death Review Team (ODRT) was formed at the end of 2020.
- The purpose of this cross-divisional team is to review the circumstances surrounding fatal client overdoses, including barriers and challenges within each individual case.
- DCC has also created a process to begin providing Narcan to identified clients at risk.

Goals and Ongoing Initiatives

- DCC is currently developing and implementing a plan for the transition of all clients from old monitoring equipment to new equipment.
- The monitoring center has begun the systematic transition to collect old equipment and install the new equipment; this involves regional training on the new monitoring equipment. The new equipment will enhance the performance of the system and further assist with tracking location when there are difficulties with cellular tower services. The new equipment also has an increased battery life for the users.
- DCC is transitioning to paperless case files to reduce storage needs and facilitate easy transfer of files.
- DCC is training new staff in evidence-based practices (EBP) during Agent Basic Training (ABT) to ensure training is consistent with DCC policy.
 - DCC is determining risk assessment procedures needed outside of DCC's risk-assessment tool, COMPAS, to accurately identify the risk of clients.



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Updates from the Division of Juvenile Corrections (DJC)



Division of Juvenile Corrections (DJC)

The mission of the Division of Juvenile Corrections is to promote a juvenile justice system that balances protection of the community, youth accountability and competency building for responsible and productive community living.

Accomplishments

- All DJC field and GROW Academy staff were trained on Dialectic Behavior Therapy (DBT) and will be incorporating additional Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) work in case management.
- Psychological Services Unit (PSU) staff have been instrumental in the implementation of DBT across the facility, training all new staff at the Academy in DBT as well as providing individual DBT therapy for youth.
- DJC has worked to implement web-based/electronic, cognitive-based treatment strategies.
- DJC reopened the school building with health measures in place, such as designating classroom locations to promote social distancing and daily sanitization of classrooms. Commonly used surfaces such as door knobs and gym equipment were also continually sanitized during the day.
- The internship program at Lincoln Hills School/Copper Lake School (LHS/CLS) continues to be an enormous success in providing excellent training and experience for Doctoral Psychology students.
- PSU staff have been instrumental in developing the Music Arts Initiative (MAI) for youth, with many youth enjoying the opportunity to engage in various artistic and musical activities.
- The Narrative Group provides a safe, supportive atmosphere for youth as they explore the facets of their intersecting identities, helping youth address pertinent aspects of their identities, and promoting positive identity development.
- DJC completed a two-plus-year effort at LHS/CLS to renovate all living units.
- DJC substantially reduced the use of room confinement at LHS/CLS.

Ongoing Goals/Initiatives

- DJC has trained all staff in implicit bias and is working to implement strategies into daily operations and policy-related work.
- DJC is actively implementing treatment specialists into the field to provide additional support for community youth.
- The GROW Academy opened back up to residential programming and continues to safely transition back to face-to-face programming, home visits, family visits, rewards and field trips.
- DJC is finalizing the implementation of a new non-compliant behavior response system and pro-social reinforcement system.
- DJC continues to enhance Youth Counselor use of DBT skills.
- DJC continues to work on improving operations and updating the electronic case reference manual.



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Updates from the Division of Management Services (DMS)



Division of Management Services (DMS)

The Division of Management Services (DMS) provides the analytical and operational services that support all Department of Corrections' policies, programs and service delivery initiatives.

Accomplishments

- The Office of Records Management (ORM) launched a new Public Records Center Portal and processed 2,381 public records requests from January 2021 - June 2021.
- The Bureau of Training and Staff Development (BTSD) developed hybrid and all-virtual training formats.
- Since January 1, 2021, 223 Correctional Officers graduated from the Correctional Officer Pre-Service Academy, and 70 Probation & Parole Agents graduated from Agent Basic Training.
- The Bureau of Technology Management (BTM) improved video technologies for PIOC video visitations.
- BTM completed surveillance and door control equipment upgrades for 10 sites.
- BTM installed network connections, software and equipment in the PIOC educational environment.
- Since January 1, 2021, the Bureau of Budget and Facilities Management (BBFM) has approved six enumerated projects at a combined cost of \$27 million:
 - 1) Milwaukee County - Type 1 Juvenile Corrections Facility, design study portion; 2) Central generating plant - water system infrastructure improvements; 3) Oshkosh Correctional Institution (OSCI) secure residential treatment and diversion units; 4) Wisconsin Secure Program Facility (WSPF) new Health Services Unit; 5) Taycheedah Correctional Institution (TCI) security improvements; 6) Stanley Correctional Institution (SCI) new Health Services Unit.
- The Bureau of Finance and Administrative Services (BFAS) purchasing section completed several major procurements, including an intent to award for Radio Frequency, Alcohol, and Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) Monitoring Services, and for Automated Dispensing Technology for the Central Pharmacy.

Goals and Ongoing Initiatives

- DMS is working to formalize BTSD blended learning plans and complete a curriculum review.
- DMS is developing enhancements in the electronic medical records system, including e-prescribe functionality, conversion of paper records to an electronic format, e-signature, and an online portal for PIOC's and clients.
- DMS is in the process of installing networking, software and equipment for multiple educational trailers and Pell grant sites.
- DMS is developing a system that allows community providers to share community and client information that supports Reentry initiatives.



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