



JJPOC Incarceration Workgroup MEETING

OCTOBER 16TH, 2023

1:00 PM-2:30 PM

Web-Based Meeting – Zoom

THIS MEETING DOES CONTAIN A PRESENTATION- DISCUSSIONS AND UPDATES

Meeting Summary

1. Announcements

- Sharmese Walcott has been named the new Co-chair of the Incarceration Workgroup.

2. Commissary Subgroup Update

- Plan will be implemented on November 1, 2023.
- Three sessions of the training and program build-out have been completed. The fourth session will be taking place this Friday, October 20, 2023.
- Three in-person technical assistance trainings will be held following the completion of the training program.
- Communication has begun over the past few weeks with the youth's families to update them on the Implementation plan.
- Some hesitant feedback from youth's families has been noted.
- A one-month transition period will be in place where youth are able to use both the points they gained and the funds they have been provided at the commissary.

3. Implementation Plan Update

- Report is due December 15, 2023.
- Workgroup is currently considering two options for recommendation.
 - Option one: Repurposing the facility at Silver Street in Middletown, CT.
 - Option two: Building a new facility and designing it to be developmentally appropriate to be more aligned with the current Regions unit.
- During the next meeting scheduled for November 1, 2023, the Workgroup plans to vote on which recommendation they plan to endorse and move forward with.
 - Once finalized, the Workgroup will begin building out the phase-in plan and the associated costs.
- A question was raised about the financial cost comparison for both option one and option two of the Implementation plan.



- Option one: to repurpose and renovate the existing facility in Middletown, CT, the renovation would cost roughly \$22 million and the annual operation cost would be roughly \$18 million.
- Option two: to build a new facility, the cost would be roughly \$78 million and the annual operating cost would be \$18 million.
- A question was raised about the operating cost being the same for both plans. The concern is that operating a new building in the same way one would operate a renovated building would lead to the same issues down the road.
 - The proposed budget for the operating cost was devised from analyzing the operating cost of residential centers in Hartford and Bridgeport as well as incorporating a population of 50 youth into the design where the former plan was designed for 120 youth.
 - These two factors, along with the Judicial Branch staffing and operating the facility in different ways than DOC has in the past would mitigate these concerns substantially.

4. Re-entry Success Plan Update

- Plan is to be created by SDE, DOC, DCF, and the Judicial Branch in consultation with the Education Workgroup, Incarceration Workgroup, and the Community Expertise Workgroup.
- Re-entry Subgroup, over the past year, has met with national and local partners, and has reviewed existing practices through different state agencies and community partners to formulate the current draft plan.
 - This draft has been sent to all Incarceration Workgroup members.
- State agencies such as the Department of Housing, Department of Labor, and the Department of Social Services have all reviewed the draft plan as well.
- 40 youth completed surveys about re-entry support services they have previously received; what was helpful for them and what was not.
 - Questions about multiple types of supports including: education, job services, credible messenger and reintegration mentors were all included in the survey.
 - Feedback received from the youth are going to be included in each section of the report to substantiate the recommendation with direct experience.
- Feedback on the draft re-entry plan from the Incarceration Workgroup is asked to be submitted by this Friday, October 20, 2023.
 - This feedback will be incorporated into the plan, and this new draft plan will be submitted again to all partnering state agencies. Following their review, a new draft will be submitted again to the Incarceration Workgroup by October 27, 2023.
 - The Reentry Subgroup will review the feedback and on November 20, 2023, the Incarceration Workgroup will vote on the plan.



5. Review of DOC monthly chemical agent and full stationary/therapeutic reports

- One instance of chemical agent usage reported in August.
 - Incident was a fight that involved two youth. One youth was able to calm himself down, while the other was not.
 - This youth became combative towards staff which resulted in the use of a chemical agent.
 - Two staff members were injured during this incident.
- One instance of chemical agent usage reported in September.
 - Incident involved two youth, one of which was not involved in the incident in August.
 - Chemical agent was used to stop one youth from using repeated hand strikes to the face of the other youth.
 - No injuries were reported for this incident.
- A question was raised about the procedure following these incidents when youth are assaulting other youth.
 - Typically, unless a weapon is involved in the incident, state police are not involved and an investigation is performed internally by DOC.
 - Mental health and medical staff are involved in these incidents for both the victim and assailant.
- A question was asked about what mediation and conflict resolution tactics are used to counteract youth violence.
 - DOC stated there is no formal curriculum currently in place to address mediation and conflict resolution strategies.
 - While there is no formal curriculum, DOC noted that there is a lot of informal mediation that takes place between officers, counselors, tenants, staff, and youth. Rapport has been built and support systems are in place to address youth's needs, even if there is no formal curriculum currently.
 - Young Men's Group and Restorative Justice Circles are implemented to address youth needs and allow for the youth to speak to one another with a mediator present.
 - Music and Art Therapy is also utilized in these controlled settings.

Next Meeting: November 20th, 2023