



The Illinois Department of Corrections

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Regular Board Meeting of the Adult Advisory Board
Tuesday, December 17th, 2024 - 10:00 am to 1:00pm
Location: North Lawndale Adult Transition Center at 2839 W Fillmore, Chicago, IL 60612

<https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=m74ffa7af0365e8e46b441aca2e1ed52b>

Join by meeting number

Meeting number (access code): 2866 494 1432

Meeting password: q5bWHZqRC62

Join by phone

+1-312-535-8110 United States Toll

(Chicago)

+1-415-655-0002 US Toll

Committee Member	Present	Telephone	Absent	
Illinois Department of Corrections Staff:				
Acting Director – Latoya Hughes	X			
Assistant Director – Alyssa Williams			X	
Confidential Assistant to Director – Shelith Hansbro	X			
Chief of Programs – Jennifer Parrack		X		
Chief Inspector – Areda Johnson		X		
Chief of Public Safety – Ernest Cato		X		
Chief of Compliance – Michael Crum	X			
Chief of Operations – Justin Hammers		X		
Deputy Director Region 1 – Christine Brannon-Dortch			X	
Deputy Director Region 2 – Angela Locke			X	
Deputy Director Region 3 – Kim Smith		X		
Chief of Administration – Jared Brunk			X	
Policy Advisor to Director – Sophia Manuel	X			
Public Information Officer – Naomi Puzzello	X			
Planning & Research – Sharon Shipinski			X	
Chief Financial Officer – James Deen		X		
Staff Development and Training Manager – Steve Ryan		X		

Mission: To serve justice in Illinois and increase public safety by promoting positive change for those in custody, operating successful reentry programs, and reducing victimization.

Chief of Women and Family Services – Melinda Eddy		X		
Manager of IGR – Marvin Williams		X		
Medical Director – Dr. Steven Bowman			X	
Chief of Mental Health – Dr. Melvin Hinton			X	
Chief of Investigations and Intelligence – Edward Escamilla		X		
Agency Procurement Officer – Jacenta Wilson			X	
Center Supervisor – Andre Martin	X			
Board Members:				
David Olson – Loyola University	X			
Jenny Vollen-Katz – Executive Director of John Howard Association		X		
Nneka Jones-Tapia – Executive Director of Chicago Beyond		X		
Marlon Chamberlain – Heartland Alliance	X			
Sadie Joseph – North Lawndale Employment Network	X			
Nathan Stephens – Illinois State University	X			
Xavier Williams			X	
John Crivellone – Cook County Public Defender’s Office		X		
Alexis Mansfield – Women’s Justice Institute, Member of the Public	X			
Illinois Coalition for Higher Education in Prison - Lejia Johnson			X	
Attorney in Private Practice - Reena Sikdar		X		
Guest:				
Gwyn Troyer – John Howard, Member of the Public		X		
Emma Ruth – Policy Manager Cabrini Green Legal Aid – Member of the Public		X		
Andrea Dantus – Impact for Equity - Member of the Public		X		
Dee White Smith – Member of the Public		X		
Ashton Hoselton – Policy and Research Director with the Education Justice Project – Member of the Public		X		

Chairman’s Remarks

Shelith Hansbro opens the meeting and Board Chairman starts the meeting, roll call was verified, minutes and agenda were unable to be approved to quorum of members not being physically present.

Center Supervisor Remarks

Andre Martin:

North Lawndale ATC has been open for about twenty years and are the second correctional ATC for the Safer Foundation. The facility has a capacity for around two hundred beds. We currently have 77% of our capacity filled and are looking forward to having others join. With regards to programming, the ATC has an employment rate of 88%, currently it is lower due to the Christmas holiday. Regarding some of the other things the facility does, the facility likes to showcase artwork and things like that. The facility

recently co hosted along with Crossroads ATC an event World Aid Day, where individuals presented paintings, spoken words, music, and drawings. The facility takes reentry very seriously, and really focuses on ensuring the individual is successful upon reentry. Mr. Martin introduced a resident that described his passion for yoga, and what yoga has taught him and made him better, but also that he is able to attend yoga classes to learn to be an instructor. The resident discovered yoga at Hill Correctional Facility, he attended the class due to not wanting to sit in his cell and he described it as the best thing to happen. When he first started attending classes it was a volunteer that ran the course, but that changed with COVID took place, and then it became peer led, and that is where he discovered the joy of being a yoga instructor. He credits yoga to helping him deal with the stresses and emotions of life that we go through every day. The resident is hoping the Department considers offering a yoga programming daily to help individuals in custody.

Director's Remarks

Director Latoya Hughes thanks the resident presenter for his passion for yoga, as well as, reminding us that the Department doesn't know what will inspire and connect with that individual, it is a having all these wonderful partners and collaborative workers in various spaces. With regards to 2025, the Department is looking to fulfill positions within the Department. In early 2025, the Department will have their first ever DEIA Administrator, as well as our Chief of Parole. Our Chief Inspector Areeda McIntosh has been working with the grievance process and is looking forward to hiring more grievance officers for our facilities. As we continue to work to improve the grievance process for the individuals in custody, one of the things we are looking into as well, is what our tablet implementation will have on the grievance process and what that will look like. I also wanted to address the Construction Manager and Owners Advisor RFP that was released. His entity will be the people who will help the Department gather information from stakeholders, so that information is presented to the future designers. The Department thought it was important to invest in someone who does this for living, as the Department has discussed the importance of ensuring that we receive stakeholder feedback, so that the build is the best that we can and that moves the Department forward in progress. The Department is looking forward to the process that is exciting as a new side of progress towards something new and different for the Department. We will continue to keep you all up to date as we look forward in those stages and in those processes.

AAB Chair's Report

Dave Olson:

One of the things we have been working on with the Department is to collect information from all of the women at the Logan Correctional Center. We have been asking the women what they would like to see in the new facility, what their priorities were, what their desires were. We ended up getting responses from around 40% of all the women that were there. Looking at the data, they too raise the desire for more opportunities for them, and they would like to see some form of vocational programming in the facility. Another item is we are looking at truth in sentencing in Illinois and will be meeting with the students at Danville Correctional Center to present what we found and what the implications are. The last thing to mention, is the Chicago Beyond Event that Nneka Tapia organizing the event, because often times people forget about the conditions in prison, and that there are also a large number of people that are in prison that are employed and their experience as well.

Board Member Updates

Alexis Mansfield:

The Women's Justice Institute has a unification ride at Logan Correctional Center, it is our biggest ride of the year, except for family fun day. We had a lot of great activities, gingerbread houses, and snowmen, and all the that. We were also able to provide professional photos for all the families so they could get a real studio shot, which was excellent. We have also been partnering with Aunt Mary's Storyboard, so that moms and children can read together. And we did it for everyone there, even someone in their twenties was able to read with their mom. A lot of the participants have never read a book together. The plan is to do that quarterly to allow them so that the children and parents can do that together. Also, one of the things we want to work on, is talking about how we can make a better, family friendly policies with regards to visitation. The Institute is seeing many people getting turned away or being told that here are issues when they come or being discouraged from coming because of obstacles in the policies. Along with that is we are partnering with Safer Foundation with doing a new workshop this year, and we are doing a family drop-in visitation hour once a month to answer all the questions when it comes to visitation and contacting an individual in custody in one place. Another item we are working with other partners about a survey being conducted in the Spring about domestic violence and connection to incarceration as well as traumatic brain injuries and other issues, as well as another survey of women inside the facilities, about what are the needs and what isn't the need.

Marlon Chamberlain:

The IL Coalition to End Permanent Punishments is currently working with the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation to potentially remove barriers and align certain professions that individuals work while they're incarcerated, for when the individual is released, they can work those jobs. We also have a survey out call The Journey to Freedom, and the goal of the survey is to survey all individuals across the state to potentially shape our policy next year. We are also going to be using this survey to asset frame formally incarcerated individuals. Also, delivery fellowship launched their second fellowship while the individuals are in the Illinois Department of Corrections. Along with a know your rights workshop, centered around protections that individuals do not know about to find out if the protections are working or if changes in legislation or policy is needed if they are not working. Finally, we are very close to passing a bill that will automate the expungement and concealing process for certain convictions, if this bill passes IL will have the most expansive clean slate legislation in the country. The bill will be beneficial to individuals coming out of the system in a sense to being able to clean their records for housing and employment.

Sadie Joseph:

The North Lawndale Employment Network held a toy drive for our clients that are not able to purchase toys for their children. We have a sweet beginners tea that is coming up in February where we recognize a client of the month a male and a female, as well as one of our organizations are recognized at this team. We also held graduation and had 45 of our clients graduate and are job ready. We are creating a ten-day class that will provide job readiness, cognitive behavior interventions, resume building, and annual management. We are also doing a 90-day program called Empower Now where we are taking the youth aged 18 to 24 and providing them with job skills as well as allowing them to work downstairs in our production. For our clients, we provide transportation, interview clothing, and anything to break barriers they are facing. We also assist our clients if they are having housing difficulty, we have Partnership with Wellness West as well as a few other places.

Jenny Vollen-Katz

The John Howard Association will be continuing with what we have been doing with visiting facilities, but one of our goals is to spend more time at the ATCs. ATCs are different than other facilities because the individuals are involved in work release programs and have more movement. ATCs is also a great place to learn about different events happening at different ATCs but also the facilities that each individual comes from is different, it provides different information JHA doesn't receive.

New Business

Issues of Contraband and Restriction on Paper Mail

Edward Escamilla

Regarding drugs on the inside of our facility, it is very different than what you see on the outside of our facility. Inside our facilities, the Department majority of what we see is synthetic cannabinoids and what being called across the country "wasp dope." The Department has been seeing some fentanyl coming in, but rarely do we see methamphetamine, heroin, cocaine, or leafy marijuana. The Department has seen a tremendous raise in drugs inside our facilities. What we are seeing is individuals taking household chemicals and loose-leaf paper to create a compound that an individual can smoke a receive a high. This has caused a difficulty on the Departments end to identify what it is an individual has smoked, there isn't anything available to hit on it to help us identify what it is. The Department also sees it coming into our facilities in various ways, whether it is through the mail, visitors, and unfortunately through staff. The Department has our intel and IA teams at the facility trying to identify what the substance or drug is, who is bringing it in, and how they are bringing it in.

Justin Hammers

The Department is looking into ways to help prevent these challenges in our facilities, whether that be existing protocols and policy, look at ways to implement new security measures and learning from best practices around the nation to ensure safety and security at our facilities. We are currently working with the Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology in developing a multi-factor authentication program for legal mail to further enhance our security measures. The Department is also exploring scanning mail, we are in a contract with IC Solutions to expand the technological capabilities throughout our facilities. We are in the early stages on that and are actively listening to our stakeholders. The Department currently has two pilot programs that are active and two different facilities where individuals could get placed on a mail copy; that happens when we have clear evidence the individual is misusing or attempting to misuse the mail system to introduce contraband into our facility, but other than the two programs, the Department has not made any changes to how an individual in custody send and receive mail.

Extent of COVID in IDOC Facilities and Current Policies to Reduce Transmission

Justin Hammers

Currently, the Department still track COVID with our staff and our population. Currently, it has been reported that 16 staff members throughout the state are COVID positive and 13 individuals in custody are positive as well. The Department has not made any changes with how we deal with COVID since April of last year, when the CDC updated the guidance. The Department still offers vaccinations, and we no longer mandate masks, however, we do offer masks to our individuals if they wish to wear them. The Department only tests if an individual presents symptoms of COVID, we no longer test when they arrive from the county or are moved from once facility to another like the Department had been doing before. Also, if an individual is presenting no symptoms, but feels something is going on, the individual can work

with our health office to gather a test. If an individual in our custody does test positive, we will then work with our health services with regards to isolation and quarantine for the individual.

Status of Impact Programs

Justin Hammers

The Department's program is currently operating out of Murphysboro Life Skills Reentry Center. Currently, the Department has 48 individuals in the program, we have seen 166 individuals graduate, 94 of them from the year program and 72 from the 120-day program. The program used to be like a boot camp style program with physical endurance and yelling, as to now, it is more of a Life Skills Center that offers education and pre-vocational and re-entry related skills to our individuals in custody.

Melinda Eddy

Logan Correctional Center does have an impact program for the incarcerated women with only two participants.

Eligibility and use of Adult Transition Centers

Jennifer Parrack

The Department has four Adult Transition Centers across the state of Illinois, two are ran by the Safer Foundation, Crossroad ATC and North Lawndale ATC, both are male facilities. Then we have two being ran by the Department, Peoria ATC which is a male facility, and Fox Valley ATC, which is our female facility. The Department does have a quick turnover, due to if an individual is eligible to earn early program sentencing credits when they are at an ATC, they are eligible for a day for day. We also work to make sure individuals have all their health care coverage and state IDs, any of the things that we can do before they arrive at the ATC. The timeframe that an individual is eligible for ATC placement is two and a half years and three years for permanent party. Permanent party is an individual that is going to work in dietary or maintenance within the facility and then move into regular ATC placement after six months. During COVID, the Department started utilizing the exception criteria on a more regular basis, where we review individuals that have higher level convictions that traditionally were not placed in ATCs. All normal standard placements are done through the transfer coordinator's office. I am an additional review with all the non-traditional ATC placements or if TCO has any questions or unsure about a placement. All placements are on a case-by-case basis on if they're appropriate placement for an ATC. The Department wants all the beds full due to the success rate of our ATC's. The Department focuses on placing an individual as far back to that time frame as we can, so they can maximize their time at the ATC. The main goal is getting people work ready, getting them out working, and also if their needs need is met in the community.

Old Business

Dave Olson

Friendly reminder to board member to get their required training completed by the end of the year to say in compliance. If anyone has any questions, please reach out to Steve Ryan.

Public Comment

Emma Ruth

With regards to the women at Logan who are eligible to have their sentences commuted to electronic monitoring, I am wondering where the Department is at in the process of continuing to explore these options to be commuting people and not depopulating these facilities?

Director Hughes

Chief Parrack has my discretion to review ATC placement as well as electronic monitoring. If there are individuals who are within the Department who fills these requirements, that is something we evaluate with each person's situation to determine whether their placement within the Department is necessary based on their conditions. The Department is evaluating all those options and all those opportunities.

Andrea Dantus

Do we have any indication that banning physical mail will dramatically decrease drugs into facilities?

Edward Escamilla

The vast majority of what the Department is finding as it relates to drugs that is coming into our facilities is through the mail, so I do believe that cutting off one piece of mail that has it or majority which we believe it to be is going to be beneficial to the Department.

Adjournment

Dave Olson made a motion to adjourn, and Sadie Joseph seconded, meeting adjourned.

Subcommittee on Women

2024 Year in Review

Melinda Eddy

Our first highlight of the year was Logan Correctional Center had their first family fun day in partnership with the Women's Justice Institute. We were able to hold a picnic of around 150 families were able to join, and about 50 mothers were able to be a part of this picnic. It was just a fun day where the moms were able to play games and eat with their children. It was a great day and a great success and one we hope to continue in the future and an event we are hoping to bring to Decatur Correctional Center as well. Our second highlight is the Department was able to have two reentry summits at Decatur Correctional Center as well as two reentry summits at Logan Correctional Center. Another is our Defy Venture program at Logan Correctional Center, it is an entrepreneurial program that individuals in custody participant in a four-to-six-month program, where they work hard on a business plan and reinforces on how to work in the community, and we were able to have one graduation in 2024. We hope to bring that program to Decatur Correctional Center as well. The Department focused on continuing to ensure Fox Called ATC was at 90% capacity or higher. That has taken a whole initiative of ensuring the women are in the least restrictive possible environment, by making sure that the women that are coming into the RNC are screened appropriately, so keeping those numbers up at ATC has been very success. We're continuously evaluating and trying to get our minimum population over to Decatur. Logan Correctional Center has opened up a pregnancy wing, the Department has made policy and procedure changes for anyone that is disapproved for the moms and babies' program will then go through Chief Eddy's office, to hopefully keep moms and babies as full as possible. Lastly, the Department has really expanded our collaboration with DCFS, when DCFS has family reunification as the

goal, the Department is now working with them and allowing those case plans as part of DOC case planning.

Shelith Hansbro

Decatur Correctional Center has had Christmas Behind Bars that we've been able to partner with God Behind Bars, they held a family day, and brought presents and day long activities with family members and the individuals in custody. They will be returning soon so every incarcerated individual who participates in the program will have gifts to give out to their young children and grandchildren.

Looking Forward – What do we hope to accomplish in Women and Family Services in 2025?

Melinda Eddy

We are planning to launch a program like Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Center at Decatur Correctional Center in 2025. We also hope to compete in All Things You at both Logan and Decatur in 2025, looking at Spring for Logan and then Summer or Fall for Decatur. Also, hoping to expand Defy Ventures program into Decatur, and continue our population management efforts of making sure the women are in the least restrictive environment possible.

New Business

Melinda Eddy

None

Closeout/Adjournment

Melinda Eddy adjourns the meeting.