

2025 LaSalle County Juvenile Detention Center Inspection Report

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ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

Executive Summary

The Department of Juvenile Justice conducted the annual inspection of the LaSalle County Juvenile Detention Center in Ottawa, IL on March 27, 2025, pursuant to 730 ILCS 5/3-15-2(b). While there were some strengths noted, the center was found to be non-compliant with some requirements of the 20 Ill. Adm. Code 2602 County Juvenile Detention Standards ("County Detention Standards"). The areas noted as non-compliant are listed in the table below, with specific observations noted in the following sections of this report. Each section of the report includes policy and practice recommendations offered to gain compliance and move towards best practice. Those recommendations are combined in a second table at the end of the report.

Areas of Non-Compliance

Section	Requirement
2602.230 Education	Teacher student ratios are at least 1:12 for general education and 1:8 for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Qualified special education staff are assigned to youth with special education status and special education testing is available for youth in custody.
2602.120 Sanitation	Quarters equipment (e.g., toilets, washbasins, shower stalls and sinks) shall be thoroughly cleaned each day.
2602.90 Mental Health Services	A service plan shall be developed for each youth that includes: 1) Counseling or psychotherapy to be provided; 2) Behavioral management strategies and goals; 3) Medication; 4) Protocol for monitoring youth's progress; and 5) Needed adjustments to normal detention programs and procedures.

Methodology

- Interviews Conducted
 - Director
 - Assistant Director
 - Juvenile Detention Officer
 - Educator
 - Wellpath Nurse
 - Wellpath Mental Health Clinician
 - Youth (4)
- Documents Reviewed
 - Policy 7.02 "Use of Room Confinement"
 - Policy 16.05 "Use of Force by Staff"
 - Policy 16.06 "Use of Restraints"
 - Policy 16.07 "Display of Restraints"
 - Policy 16.11 "Motivational Learning Model"

- Sample Youth Files
- Sample Youth Medical File
- Sample Employee Background Checks
- Sample Youth Grievances
- Fire Inspection Report (2/13/25)
- Health Department Inspection Report (12/20/24)
- Dietary Menus
- Incident Logs
- Daily Programming Schedule
- Grievance Procedure
- Grievance Log
- Resident Handbook
- Youth Confinement Records
- Sample Youth IEP

Overview

The LaSalle County Juvenile Detention Center is a 16-bed facility with three living units. At the time of audit, the facility had four residents in custody. The facility offers in-person visitation for all youth two days (Thursdays and Sundays) per week, at least two free phone calls; with a third available if the youth does not receive a visit.

Admission Policy and Procedures

The LaSalle County Juvenile Detention Center offers 24-hour coverage for admissions. Youth property is collected, inventoried, and laundered according to standards.

The updates to County Detention Standards in 2021 included the addition of Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) requirements, including the requirement that all youth be assessed for risk of victimization upon intake. The facility started completing these assessments in 2023, using the same screening form utilized at the county jail. Completed forms were observed in the files of all youth at the facility. The Resident Handbook has been edited since the 2024 Inspection Report. It now includes an overview of PREA and phone numbers that a youth can call to make an allegation. Youth receive a PREA overview and take a test to confirm their understanding. All interviewed youth were familiar with PREA. The facility has not undergone a formal PREA audit.

The 2023 and 2024 reports cited issues with the quality of bedding in youth rooms and a facility policy requiring youth to remove their pants and sweatshirts before going into their rooms at night. The facility has since purchased new bedding and changed in-room policies to allow youth to have pants and sweatshirts overnight unless indicated for mental health reasons. Maintenance needs were observed, such as the water in one youth's room coming out in only a trickle. Administrators report the youth in question is given a cup with water every night. A youth should never be detained in a room without functioning water, much less when there are only four youth in a facility with 16 beds. Administrators reported water pressure has been a consistent problem at the facility for a several years. The state of

youth showers is well out of compliance with standards, as there was visible mold and mildew on shower floors, walls, and ceilings. Several dayroom and hallway walls were also in need of painting.

Areas of Non-compliance and Recommendations:

- Section 2602.120 Sanitation states: “Quarters equipment (e.g., toilets, washbasins, shower stalls and sinks) shall be thoroughly cleaned each day.”
 - Recommendations
 - Repair all water fountains in youth rooms.
 - Clean all showers, walls, and ceilings to remove mold and mildew.
 - Paint walls in need of repair.
 - Complete a formal PREA audit.

Personnel, Staffing, and Supervision

The facility had two administrators, five supervisory staff, and ten Juvenile Detention Officers (JDOs) employed on the date of the inspection. The small number of JDOs employed continues to be insufficient to adequately staff the facility. The Assistant Director covers a lot of shifts, including the evening shift on the date of the inspection. Most day and evening shifts are covered by only three total staff. Despite the low staffing numbers, the facility has managed to avoid resorting to the use of youth confinement to address staffing deficiencies. This is largely due to the low youth population totals at the facility; however, this strategy leaves very little margin for error.

Detention Programs, Youth Discipline, and Confinement

The facility utilizes a traditional point card and level system to manage youth behavior. Levels are determined daily and determine later bedtimes, additional snacks, and access to things like a video game system. Staff grade youth collaboratively at the end of every shift and share points with youth to give them opportunities to ask questions and promote transparency.

The facility has a well-established daily schedule that is adhered to consistently. Every youth interviewed affirmed the consistency of the daily schedule. The facility makes frequent use of the outside area, as youth shared they can go outside for recreation daily, weather permitting. The frequent use of the outdoor area has been a strength of the facility for several years.

The facility continues to address negative youth behavior through a set of sanctions called “Special Programs.” Youth are placed on one of four special programs (called Special Programs A-D). A youth is placed on Special Program A for minor infractions and is assigned interventions such as community service or cleaning assignments. More significant negative behaviors earn further special programs, which are associated with more severe consequences. The 2022 and 2023 inspection reports cited an overuse of confinement associated with Special Program D. The facility has revised policy 7.03 “Use of Room Confinement” in a manner that is compliant with County Detention Standards and there have been no reported confinements associated with Special Program D in 2025. Both youth and staff affirmed that the use of confinement associated with a special program has not taken place. The 2024 Inspection Report found the Resident Handbook needed revision, as it stated, “For offenses dealing with

major rule violations, such as battery, sexual assault, or fighting, you will serve 3 hours in your room.” This statement was modified to state youth “may” be confined for up to three hours.

The facility also made changes to a practice that required youth to remain confined for the entire day any time they choose to go to their room during any part of the programming day. That practice has been amended and now permits youth to re-enter programming when they desire to do so with their points impacted by the amount of time they chose to miss.

The facility is now compliant with the confinement portion of the County Detention Standards.

Medical, Health Care, and Mental Health Services

Medical and Mental Health Services continue to be offered by Wellpath via a shared contract with the LaSalle County Jail. Nurses are stationed in the adult portion of the facility and present 16 hours per day with a 24-hour on call nurse available. A physician is available once per week and on call as needed. Medication is administered by nursing staff and is monitored and prescribed by a physician.

The contract also covers 8 hours of mental health services for youth. The Wellpath mental health practitioners (MHPs) are also based in the adult portion of the facility and report to the juvenile side a few times per week. The MHPs do a mental health assessment for new youths in compliance with standards, however treatment plans are not developed for any youth to guide clinical services. The MHP characterized most youth contacts as “check-ins.” In order to be compliant with standards, intentional service plans will need to be developed for youth in need of them.

A non-licensed mental health professional from North Central Behavioral Services continues to provide therapeutic services to youth. This provider has been funded through the 708 grant for several years and serves justice-involved youth in the surrounding area and in the JDC. For the youth under his caseload, the provider typically introduces psychotherapy and behavioral health services, and provides coaching and mentoring to the youth. He also provides coaching and mentoring to youth outside of his caseload as well, running a psychoeducational group every other week that is available to all youth.

Areas of Non-Compliance and Recommendations

- Section 2602.90 Mental Health Services states: “A service plan shall be developed for each youth that includes: 1) Counseling or psychotherapy to be provided; 2) Behavioral management strategies and goals; 3) Medication; 4) Protocol for monitoring youth's progress; and 5) Needed adjustments to normal detention programs and procedures.”
 - Recommendations:
 - Develop and implement individualized service plans for those youth assessed as needing services.

Education

Educational services at the facility have been out of compliance for several years, as there has been no change since the 2024 inspection. The facility employs only one full-time educator, who is a former volunteer at the facility that was hired in her educational capacity in August 2021. Youth speak highly of

the educator; however, she is only licensed to teach K-9. She does not have the proper licensure to teach high school.

Youth in the facility are enrolled in Ottawa High School and either complete work delivered by their home schools or complete classes through the Edgenuity online learning platform. Special education services continue to be insufficient as noted in previous inspections. There is no special education teacher available to provide services at the facility. A position for a special education teacher has been posted for more than a year to provide 30 hours of services each week, however no one has been hired.

The facility remains non-compliant with the education portion of County Detention Standards for the fourth consecutive year.

Areas of Non-Compliance and Recommendations

- 2602.230 Education states: “Teacher student ratios are at least 1:12 for general education and 1:8 for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Qualified special education staff are assigned to youth with special education status and special education testing is available for youth in custody.”
 - Recommendations:
 - Hire a special education teacher to ensure services can be provided for youth with IEPs.
 - Identify a process to have a substitute teacher in the event of a teacher absence.
 - Hire an additional teacher with an endorsement fitting the youth population of the facility.

Recommendations

Section	Recommendations
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hire a special education teacher to ensure services can be provided for youth with IEPs.• Identify a process to have a substitute teacher in the event of a teacher absence.• Hire an additional teacher with an endorsement fitting the youth population of the facility.
Admissions Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete a formal PREA Audit.
Sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Repair all water fountains in youth rooms.• Clean all showers, walls, and ceilings to remove mold and mildew.• Paint walls in need of repair.
Mental Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and implement individualized service plans for youth assessed as needing services.