

2025 Sangamon County Juvenile Detention Center Inspection Report

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Executive Summary

The Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (“Department”) conducted the annual inspection of the Sangamon County Juvenile Detention Center on May 7, 2025, pursuant to 730 ILCS 5/3-15-2(b). The facility was largely compliant with County Detention Standards, with one violation noted. The sections and specific requirements of 20 Ill. Adm. Code 2602, County Juvenile Detention Standards, (“County Detention Standards”) noted as non-compliant are listed in the table below, while specific observations are noted in the sections that follow. Each section of the report also includes policy and practice recommendations to either gain compliance or move towards best practices. Those are combined in a second table at the end of the report.

Areas of Non-Compliance

Section	Requirement
2602.170 Discipline	Room confinement shall not be used for a fixed period of time, but only until the youth is calm enough to rejoin programming without being a risk to the safety of others.

Methodology

- Documents Reviewed
 - Handle with Care – Use of Force Policy
 - Youth Grievance Policy
 - Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Policies
 - Room Confinement Policy
 - Medical Licenses
 - Sample Employee Background Checks
 - Sample Individual Program Plan Documentation
 - Confinement Documentation
 - Educator Licenses
 - Youth Grievance Log
 - Sample Youth Grievances
 - Sample Youth Files
- Interviews Conducted
 - Facility Director
 - Probation Director
 - Juvenile Detention Officers (3)
 - Juvenile Detention Officer Supervisor
 - Nurse
 - Educator
 - Youth (4)
 - Mental health Practitioner (MHP)

Overview

The Sangamon County Juvenile Detention Center is a 24-bed facility located in Springfield, Illinois. There were eight youth detained at the time of the inspection. The facility was staffed, with 18 out of 21 budgeted positions filled and several interviews scheduled over the following week. Most daytime shifts are covered by at least five staff (including the supervisor), which is more than sufficient given the number of youth in the facility.

Admission Policy and Procedures

The facility has several comprehensive policies that address procedures related to the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). The facility has implemented a screening tool to assess the risk of sexual victimization based on PREA standards as observed in youth files. Youth are also screened via the Adolescent Suicide/Homicide Risk Assessment and CRAFFT Substance Abuse Assessment. The facility has not yet undergone a formal PREA audit.

The facility has implemented a thorough admission search process, that involves pat downs of youths by both officers and facility staff, followed by a search via a body scanner. Strip searches are only conducted if there is an individualized suspicion.

Recommendations:

- Complete a formal PREA audit.

Detention Programs, Youth Discipline, and Confinement

The facility maintains a consistent program schedule. Youth reported predictability to the schedule and knew what to expect every day.

All facility staff utilize a behavior management system and are trained in the cognitive-behavioral training (CBT) model. Staff-directed groups that cover CBT concepts such as rational and irrational thinking as well as some social skills training are facilitated daily. The behavior program includes a set of tangible reinforcers where youth earn “coupons” for positive behaviors that can be redeemed for incentives. Youth earn points throughout the day and these points are converted into behavior levels each week. Youth reported they were aware of their daily points, as staff share them with youth every day. The facility behavior program contains a process that uses timeouts of 5 to 60 minutes when youth exhibit negative behavior. Youth who exhibit more egregious behaviors may be placed on an Individual Program Plan. Although the use of IPPs have been relatively rare since the facility re-opened. On one occasion, two youth were placed on IPPs simultaneously. Youth and staff reported the youth alternated being confined while on the plan. The quality of the programming assignments completed by youth on the plan is strong and indicative of good practice, however the alternating confinement of these youth is out of compliance with standards.

Youth were familiar with the grievance process and identified several areas in the facility to obtain and submit a grievance. Administrative responses and documentation specificity on grievance logs is extremely strong and thorough.

Areas of Non-Compliance and Recommendations

- 2602.170 Discipline states: “Room confinement shall not be used for a fixed period of time, but only until the youth is calm enough to rejoin programming without being a risk to the safety of others.”
 - Recommendations:
 - Ensure youth on IPPs are only confined until they are calm enough to rejoin programming.

Medical and Health Care

Medical services are provided via a contract with Advanced Correctional Healthcare (ACH) that provides 20 hours of nursing services per week split between two nurses, typically over 3-4 days. A physician is on call and visits the facility once per week. Medication was properly stored and there are clear procedures to verify youth medication during the intake process.

Mental Health Services

Mental Health Services are available through a contract with ACH that includes 15 hours of on-site services per week. A MHP was hired in February to provide these services, however she resigned shortly after the inspection. In the interim, mental health services are being provided via telehealth through ACH therapists. Youth intakes are all assessed, and treatment plans are developed for youth detained more than seven days.

Education

There are two primary teachers employed by Springfield Public School District #186, both of which are certified special education instructors. One of the educators has a special education endorsement. Classes are mostly taught via direct instruction; however, the facility also has access to Edmentum for youth to use. Youth and staff affirmed that school takes place as scheduled on a regular basis without any operational disruptions. Given the low population size at the facility, the number of teachers is sufficient to meet required ratios.

Section	Recommendations
Admissions Policies and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete a formal PREA Audit
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure youth on IPPs are only confined until they are calm enough to rejoin programming.