

# 2025 Vermilion County Juvenile Detention Center Inspection Report

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ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

## **Executive Summary**

The Department of Juvenile Justice conducted an annual inspection of the Vermilion County Juvenile Detention Center on November 5, 2025, pursuant to 730 ILCS 5/3-15-2(b). The center was found to be compliant with the requirements of 20 Ill. Adm. Code 2602 County Juvenile Detention Standards ("County Detention Standards").

## **Areas of Non-Compliance**

None.

## **Methodology**

- Interviews Conducted
  - Director
  - Assistant Director
  - Detention Officers(2)
  - Youth (4)
  - Nurses (2)
  - Mental Health Practitioners (2)
  - Educator
- Documents Reviewed
  - Sample youth files
  - Sample medical file
  - Sample incident reports
  - Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) Programming Materials
  - Programming Schedules
  - Vermilion County Juvenile Detention Center Handbook
  - Sample Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Orientation Acknowledgement Forms
  - PREA Policies
  - Sample Employee Training Documentation
  - Youth Grievance Procedure
  - Grievance Logs
  - Sample Youth Grievances and Responses
  - Youth Confinement Documentation

## **Overview**

The Vermilion County Juvenile Detention Center is a 26-bed facility located in Danville, IL. The facility has four primary living units surrounding a control center. There is a gym on-site, outdoor recreation space, and a large classroom where much of the primary programming takes place. The facility had 15 youth in custody on the date of the inspection. As noted in previous inspection reports, the physical condition

and cleanliness of the facility is excellent. On the day of the inspection, most youth were engaged in educational programming or professional visits.

### **Admission Policy and Procedures**

The Vermilion County Juvenile Detention Center conducts youth intakes 24 hours a day. The facility no longer utilizes strip searches as standard practice for youth upon intake; instead conducting pat-down and wand searches unless there is an individualized reason to conduct a strip search. All youth are screened using the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI) upon intake to assess any risk of self-harm.

The facility has an active youth orientation process for youth that includes an informational video of Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) standards and was approved for a PREA Coordinator position by the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts (AOIC) starting in 2026. The facility has not undergone a formal PREA audit. A summary of PREA standards and youth rights are in the facility Youth Orientation Manual. Youth sign an acknowledgement form after receiving the PREA orientation. The facility was able to provide substantial documentation indicating that PREA orientation is taking place for all youth. The facility completes the Victimization and Sexually Aggressive Behavior Assessment (VSAB) for all youth upon admission.

### **Recommendations**

- Complete a formal PREA audit.

### **Personnel, Staffing and Supervision**

Vermilion County has continued to take aggressive steps to address staffing shortages. In recent years, the county has raised starting salaries for line staff substantially. At the time of audit, the facility employed 18 Detention Officers, 6 Supervisors, Director, and an Assistant Director. Staffing levels at the facility continue to be adequate to maintain staffing ratios dictated by County Detention Standards. There is an average of 5-6 staff scheduled each shift during waking hours. The county has clearly invested financial resources to maintain staffing levels in a challenging recruitment environment.

### **Detention Programs, Youth Discipline, and Confinement**

The facility has an active programming schedule throughout the day. Youth attend school in the morning and early afternoon. After school, staff-directed programming and recreation are held in the school classroom. Music therapy is provided twice a week through a local school district grant. Youth eat meals together in the school classroom and have daily access to the gymnasium.

Improvements to the behavior management program cited in recent Inspection Reports have been maintained. The facility has implemented a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) program. PBIS is a nationally recognized, evidence-based program that supports youth social, educational, and behavioral competencies. Youth have regular access to family visitation, and families are offered a choice of contact or non-contact visits when they are scheduled.

The facility has a robust incentive system based upon behavior levels. There is an orientation level called Zinc and four behavior levels: Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum. Youth earn points throughout the day based on their behavior. Points are converted into levels. Youth on the highest level (Platinum) earn Amazon Fire Tablets that they can use both in and outside of their rooms. Other privileges include a handheld gaming system, stress balls, a flight simulator, and 15 minutes of 1:1 time with a Detention Officer of their choosing each week. Youth can also earn a special meal from a local restaurant if they maintain the highest level for three consecutive weeks. The steps the facility has taken to increase the number of positive incentives available to youth is commendable and evidences a clear economic investment in the program. It is also commendable that the list of incentives includes experiential incentives, which have been shown to be more effective at rewarding positive behavior than tokens alone. Youth who were interviewed shared they felt motivated by the incentives built into the program. Youth get updates on the status of their points multiple times throughout the week. Administrators share a progress document with the youth indicating the points they have achieved along with words of praise and indication of areas that can be improved. Status reports are positively worded, constructive, and indicative of best practice.

Youth who engage in negative behaviors can lose points or earn timeouts. Youth placed on timeouts are checked every 15-minutes to assess if the youth is ready to return to programming. Youth and staff interviews confirmed that timeouts are temporary and do not last longer than is needed for a youth to calm down. All timeouts are documented on a log that shows the youth's name, start and end time of the confinement, and reason for the confinement. As noted in previous inspections, the amount of behaviorally driven confinements is quite low, however the frequency and length of youth self-confinement is very high, an outlier amongst county detention centers. In October 2025, for example, there were 344 documented occasions in which youth self-confined. These confinements are not out of compliance with County Detention Standards; however, they do continue to represent an area for improvement as the volume of confinements are quite large given the facility population size. Procedures should be developed to assess reasons for these confinements, identify and implement individually based interventions, and documentation related to these events in efforts to reduce them.

#### Recommendations

- Develop a process to assess reasons for youth self-confinements, identify and implement individually based interventions, and document them.

#### Medical and Health Care

Medical staff are provided by the Vermilion County Sheriff's Department. A nurse is on-site every weekday in the morning. The nurse assesses any youth intakes that arrive as well as package medications for distribution and responds to any sick call requests from youth. A medical doctor and nurse practitioner are available through the sheriff's department when needed. There is a process in place for verifying youth medication.

## **Mental Health Services**

Mental health services are provided by multiple entities. The facility has a contract with a local mental health agency (Kleppin & Associates) to provide counseling services for 8-10 youth per week. Services are also provided by a counselor through Aunt Martha's Health and Wellness, funded by a Comprehensive Community Based Youth Services Program through the Department of Human Services (DHS). Aunt Martha's is contracted through DHS to work with youth in Vermilion County involved in the juvenile justice system. The practitioners from Aunt Martha's and Kleppin & Associates coordinate caseloads at the facility. Youth receive an initial assessment and individual counseling services. Youth on the Aunt Martha's caseload have a Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI) case plan developed as part of a three-month program that can extend post-release from the facility. There is also a substance abuse counselor through Rosecrance that provides services to youth at the facility. Facility administration holds a weekly meeting with mental health practitioners to collaborate on youth needs and treatment.

## **Education**

The facility has two full-time educators employed by School District 118 (a third teacher is onsite when necessary; a position filled by two part time, retired substitute teachers). All youth are enrolled into School District 118 or work on classes from their home school. There is an established process for contacting home schools when youth are admitted to the facility. One of the full-time educators is a licensed special education teacher (at the time of the inspection four youth had IEPs). The school uses a blended model, using both direct instruction and the Edmentum Credit Recovery System for online educational services and plan on adding access to the Edgenuity Credit Recovery System as well. Youth are assigned Chromebooks to use in the classroom to access Edmentum. Educators track attendance, indicating if youth were present or absent from class, the reason for absences, and specific work that was completed.

## **Recommendations**

Section	Recommendations
Admissions Policies and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete a formal PREA Audit.</li></ul>
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a process to assess reasons for youth self-confinements, identify and implement individually based interventions, and document them.</li></ul>