

2026 Sangamon County Juvenile Detention Center Inspection Report

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ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

Executive Summary

The Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (“Department”) conducted the annual inspection of the Sangamon County Juvenile Detention Center on April 20, 2026, pursuant to 730 ILCS 5/3-15-2(b). The facility was compliant with County Detention Standards

Areas of Non-Compliance

None.

Methodology

- Documents Reviewed
 - Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Policies
 - Medical Licenses
 - Sample Employee Background Checks
 - Sample Individual Program Plan Documentation
 - Confinement Documentation
 - Educator Licenses
 - Youth Grievance Log
 - Sample Youth Grievances
 - Sample Youth Files
 - Sample Incident Reports
 - Sample employee Training Records
 - Programming Schedules
 - Sample Mental Health Assessment
 - Sample Mental Health Treatment Plan
 - Fire Drill Documentation
- Interviews Conducted
 - Superintendent
 - Assistant Superintendents (2)
 - Probation Director
 - Juvenile Detention Officer
 - Juvenile Detention Officer Supervisors (2)
 - Program Coordinator
 - Nurse
 - Educator
 - Youth (6)
 - Mental health Practitioner (MHP)

Overview

The Sangamon County Juvenile Detention Center is a 24-bed facility located in Springfield, Illinois. There were thirteen youth detained at the time of the inspection, four of which had been admitted over the

weekend prior. The facility was well-staffed, with 18 out of 21 Detention Officer positions filled. 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. The facility was also approved for three additional Detention Officer positions and two additional administrative positions (including a Training Supervisor) by the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts (AOIC).

The facility underwent a formal PREA audit a few weeks prior to the inspection. The final report has not been published at the time of this report.

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 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.

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. Detention Officers facilitate daily groups that cover CBT concepts such as rational and irrational thinking, social skills training, restorative justice, and moral decision-making. The facility has consistent outside volunteers providing programming to youth, including mentoring, religious services, and a speaker series.

The behavior program includes a set of tangible reinforcers where youth earn “coupons” for positive behaviors that can be redeemed for incentives through a commissary. 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 reports and facility confinement data indicate youth confinements are short and rarely exceed one hour. Youth who exhibit more egregious behaviors may be placed on an Individual Program Plan, during which youth must complete a series of assignments before reintegrating with their living unit. The use of IPPs is rare, with only one youth on the status during the six months leading up to the inspection.

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 are extremely strong and thorough.

Dietary Services

Meals are provided by the county jail. Breakfast and lunch are prepared and served at the detention center by detention officers. Dinners are made at the county jail, and detention employees must drive to the jail to pick up and transport the meals back to the detention center (this is sometimes completed by probation officers). While there is nothing observed that is noncompliant with county detention standards, the current process carries some risk. It is best practice to have dietary staff on-site to manage food preparation and delivery. Doing so ensures detention officers are not pulled from their normal duties in a way that may negatively impact programming. The youth population at the Sangamon County JDC has been low over the past year, so this impact has not been felt, but if the population were to spike, this practice could potentially interfere with youth programming. There are other detention centers that have food delivered by a nearby county jail or nursing homes, but in those cases the delivering facility is either attached or adjacent to the detention center. The Sangamon County Jail is a 20-minute roundtrip drive from the detention center. That distance is disruptive to staffing and shift operations. It is recommended that the county either contract with a vendor or hire a sufficient number of dietary staff to manage meal preparation onsite.

Recommendations:

- Contract with a vendor or hire a sufficient number of dietary staff to manage meal preparation onsite.

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 nurse practitioner 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. Youth receive a physical within seven days of admission.

Mental Health Services

Mental Health Services are available through a contract with ACH. The therapist is onsite 15 hours per week (Friday – Monday). All youth receive a mental health assessment, and treatment plans are developed when indicated. Given the low population numbers at the facility, the number of hours is sufficient to meet County Detention Standards.

Education

There are two primary teachers employed by Springfield Public School District #186, both of which are certified special education instructors and participate in IEP meetings when necessary. 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. There is a clear, established process for communicating with the youth's home school on admission and release. The facility has also partnered with a local community college to provide GED programming with youth. Two youth have enrolled and can continue the program after release.

Additional Observations

Some facility fixtures need deep cleaning and repairs in some areas. Youth sinks and toilets, while functional, appeared dirty. It is facility practice to have youth clean these areas weekly; however, the needs appear to exceed what can be addressed through normal cleaning by residents. Some of the fixtures may need replacement. Other areas, such as doors and showers, also need deep cleaning or painting.

Recommendations:

- Thoroughly clean youth dayroom walls and doors.
- Thoroughly clean or replace sinks and toilets in youth rooms.

Section	Recommendations
Dietary Services	• Contract with a vendor or hire a sufficient number of dietary staff to manage meal preparation onsite.
Environmental Services	• Thoroughly clean youth dayroom walls and doors. • Thoroughly clean or replace sinks and toilets in youth rooms.