

2022 Winnebago County Juvenile Detention Center Inspection Report

JOHN ALBRIGHT

CHIEF OF PERFORMANCE AND INNOVATION
ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

Executive Summary

The Department of Juvenile Justice (“IDJJ”) conducted an annual inspection of the Winnebago County Juvenile Detention Center on July 26, 2022, pursuant to 730 ILCS 5/3-15-2(b).

The Winnebago County Juvenile Detention Center leadership has self-identified some deficiencies in areas such as the use of confinement and mental health services and are actively taking steps to address them. IDJJ did observe areas of non-compliance during this review, but many are actively being addressed by administrators. The sections and specific requirements of the 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, and steps facility leadership are already taking to address them, are noted in the following sections of this report. Each section of the report also includes policy and practice recommendations to either gain compliance or move towards best practice. Those recommendations are combined in a second table at the end of the report.

Areas of Non-Compliance

Section	Requirement
2602.90 Mental Health Services	All facilities shall employ or contract with qualified mental health professionals to address the needs of youth identified in the mental health screening, as well as needs that arise during the period of confinement. Services shall meet or exceed the community level of care.
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. . . At no time should room confinement exceed 4 hours without administrators and/or mental health staff developing an individualized plan to address the behavior.
2602.260 Recreation and Leisure Time	At least one hour of physical recreation and one hour of additional leisure activity shall be scheduled each day.

Methodology

- Interviews Conducted
 - Superintendent
 - Shift Supervisor/Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Coordinator
 - Acting Supervisor
 - 2 Detention Officers
 - Nurse Practitioner
 - 6 youth
 - Educator

- Documents Reviewed
 - Youth Grievance Log
 - Youth Grievance Procedure
 - Youth Orientation Manual
 - Sample Youth Files
 - Incident Reports
 - Use of Segregation Policy
 - Dietary Menus
 - Confinement Records
 - Health Services Contract
 - Staff Training Records
 - Winnebago Health Department Inspection (3/1022)
 - Programming Schedule

Overview

The Winnebago County Detention Center is a 48-bed facility located in Rockford, IL. The primary programming space is a large common area that is centrally located between six primary living units (referred to as Pods A-F). There are two additional living areas, one in the intake area that has two youth rooms, and another called the “Segregation” pod with three rooms, referred as Seg1, Seg2, and Seg3 respectively. The facility has a gym space just off the primary programming space, and an outdoor recreation area behind the gym. The facility has three classrooms off the main programming area.

The on-site portion of the review took place on Tuesday, July 26, 2022. At the time of the audit, the facility had 34 residents (33 males and one female). Three youth were new intakes on a COVID-19 quarantine status. There was also one additional general population resident on a COVID-19 quarantine status, scheduled to end the following day.

Admission Policy and Procedures

The Winnebago Juvenile Detention Centers offers 24-hour intake coverage. Intake screenings are conducted by the Winnebago County Assessment Center, which operates in a separate facility. If youth score high enough to warrant detention, intake takes place at the detention center. Youth clothing is stored and documented according to standards. The facility stopped conducting strip searches of youth upon intake in January of 2022 and only do so when there is an individualized reason to do so.

While the facility has yet to undergo a formal Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) audit, the facility does have an identified PREA Coordinator and has begun to implement many of the PREA requirements recently added to the County Detention Standards. Youth are assessed via the Risk for Sexual Victimization tool, and all youth at the facility receive a PREA Orientation via a video. Completion of the orientation is tracked by the PREA Coordinator. All youth were knowledgeable of their PREA rights during youth interviews.

Personnel, Staffing, and Supervision

At the time of the audit, the facility employed 23 Detention Officers with six additional openings. There are three shift Supervisors and an additional Supervisor that acts as the PREA Coordinator and manages shifts when necessary. There are two additional vacant supervisory positions.

While the facility was sufficiently staffed on the day of the audit with eight Detention Officers and a Supervisor on duty, there have been occasions in which youth have been confined due to staffing shortages. The day prior to the audit, there were five Detention Officers and a Supervisor present. Eight youth were scheduled for court. Only youth on the highest level were able to exit their rooms for recreation. The rest of the facility was confined during the shift.

Detention Programs, Youth Discipline, and Confinement

Over the past year, a team from the facility attended a program through the Georgetown University Center for Juvenile Justice Reform focused on reducing confinement in secure facilities. As part of that program, a group of staff from the facility visited the Utah's Division of Juvenile Justice and Youth Services, a national Promising Practice Site. Winnebago County is taking steps towards adopting the primary behavior management system utilized in Utah, the initial rollout of which occurred a few weeks prior to the audit, on June 15, 2022. The program operates as a token economy system, with youth daily points translating to a four-tiered level system. The facility utilizes youth shirt colors to represent a youth's given level. One of the staff at the facilities acts as a Program Manager and has a very detailed tracking record of youth point and level attainment. In the program, youth "buy" incentives" with their points, which are recorded in the Program Manger's spreadsheet. A particular strength of the program is the list of incentives youth can purchase are very experiential in nature (card games, additional recreation, etc.), which are more effective behavior reinforcements than tangible items, such as snacks. It is commendable that the facility has self-identified an area of need, sought out resources to address the need, and actively taken steps to implement improvements.

The facility also has a formal structure in place to promote strong relationships between staff and youth. Each youth is paired with a "staff advocate." All Detention Officers act as staff advocates. In that role, staff advocates are encouraged to have daily contact with their assigned youth, help the youth establish goals and complete court reports as necessary. The program is well-established at the facility as all youth interviewed were able to identify their staff advocate. The existence of such as program is an effective way to promote strong relationships, engage employees in decision-making, and promote casework practices in the absence of formal positions.

The facility has also implemented some strategies surrounding the use of consequences at the facility. The new program rollout includes the use of shorter timeouts to address negative behavior. When youth act out, staff utilize de-escalation and re-direction. If a youth remains escalated, they are issued a timeout that can last as short as 15 minutes. In these situations, supervisory staff check on the youth every 15 minutes until the youth demonstrates an ability to return to programming. Youth described the process in the same manner. These specific uses of confinement are within the expectations of the County Detention Standards. The facility does not currently have a standard method for tracking these

instances. The development of such a process would help the facility take the next steps towards reducing confinement.

Even as the facility has taken steps towards self-improvement, however, there are some significant improvements still needed. Despite use of shorter timeouts, the facility continues to utilize long-term confinements for youth, sometimes lasting multiple days. The facility refers to this status as being on the “Redirect Group.” On the date of the inspection, there were seven youth confined in their rooms during programming. One youth was on a COVID-19 quarantine status. The remaining six youth were on a Redirect Group. Youth are placed on the Redirect Group if they earn multiple rule violations over a period of days. At the start of the inspection, all the youth on the Redirect Group were in their rooms. Some of the youths were later permitted out of their rooms to complete some cognitive behavioral assignments that each youth must complete to successfully complete the Redirect Group Program. It is good that the facility makes use of such assignments to address behavior, but the use of confinement in this manner is out of compliance with standards. The standards for placing youth in the Redirect Group should be revised. According to documentation in youth files, one youth was placed on the Redirect Group for a series of infractions including making an inappropriate comment, refusing to shower, and possession of contraband for having too many sheets in his room. These are very low-level infractions. The standards by which a youth is placed on the Redirect Group should be reviewed and changed to only apply to youth who display more egregious behavior.

The facility “Use of Segregation” Policy still refers to use of confinement for 24 hours. This policy should be updated to reflect County Detention Standards.

As aforementioned, the facility is also utilizing youth confinement due to some operational challenges. While the facility is sufficiently staffed, they have youth they try to keep separate, either due to formal court orders or youth conflicts while in the facility. To accommodate, the facility has broken the youth into two groups and rotates recreation time for the groups to prevent youth interaction. While one group is recreating, the other group is confined. Such an action is in violation of the County Detention Standards regarding the use of confinement. Instead, the facility is encouraged to utilize separate programming spaces for the groups to maintain the separation they seek without the use of confinement to do so. Given the layout of the facility, the gym and outdoor recreation spaces could be utilized in this fashion. Staff and youth reported access to the gym has been inconsistent for youth due to the splitting of recreation. The facility rarely utilizes the outdoor recreation space, with one employee indicating he was recently outside with youth for the first time in approximately six years.

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. . . . At no time should room confinement exceed 4 hours without administrators and/or mental health staff developing an individualized plan to address the behavior.”
 - Recommendations:
 - Develop and implement a process to document supervisory reviews of youth in confinement to include the time of the check, youth behaviors that justify maintaining the confinement, and steps taken to de-escalate the youth.

- Eliminate the reliance on confinement for youth on the “Redirect Group” status.
 - When splitting youth into multiple programming groups, utilize separate programming spaces for the groups to maintain the separation they seek without the use of confinement to do so
 - Revise the standards by which a youth is placed on the Redirect Group to only include youth who exhibit egregious behaviors.
 - Revise the “Use of Segregation Policy” to conform to County Detention Standards.
- 2602.260 Recreation and Leisure Time states: “At least one hour of physical recreation and one hour of additional leisure activity shall be scheduled each day.”
 - Recommendations
 - Adjust schedules to provide at least one hour of gym time for all residents.
 - Develop and implement a method to track youth participation in physical recreation.

Medical, Health Care, and Mental Health Services

Medical and mental health services are provided by the Rockford School of Medicine. Nursing staff are on-site for approximately three hours in the morning and two hours in the evening. A Nurse Practitioner is on-site twice per week and conducts physicals for youth detained for seven days.

Mental health services are also provided by the Rockford School of Medicine, who subcontracts with Rosecrance Behavioral Health. At the time of the audit, youth only received mental health services if they were court-ordered for them. Most youth at the facility do not have access to these services. The facility recently received a grant through from the Community Mental Health Board. A request for quotes has gone out, requesting services seven days per week. This area is noted as non-compliant for purposes of this inspection report, however the actions of the agency regarding the request for services should be able to address this area if a contract is implemented.

Areas of Non-Compliance and Recommendations

- 2602.90 Mental Health Services states: “All facilities shall employ or contract with qualified mental health professionals to address the needs of youth identified in the mental health screening, as well as needs that arise during the period of confinement. Services shall meet or exceed the community level of care.”
 - Recommendations
 - Employ or contract with qualified mental health professionals to provide mental health services to all youth at the facility.
 - Provide a mental health assessment for all youth.
 - Develop and implement service plans for all youth with mental health needs.

Education

There are three educators on staff at the facility, all of which are employees of Rockford School District 205. Two of the teachers have a special education endorsement. The school day runs from 9am-3pm, with an hour break for lunch. Most classes are taught via direct instruction. The facility has piloted the use of Edmentum. Education is offered on a 12-month schedule; however, school was on a planned break on the date of the audit.

Recommendations

Section	Recommendations
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a process to document supervisory reviews of youth in confinement to include the time of the check, youth behaviors that justify maintaining the confinement, and steps taken to de-escalate the youth. • Eliminate the reliance on confinement for youth on the “Redirect Group” status. • When splitting youth into multiple programming groups, utilize separate programming spaces for the groups to maintain the separation they seek without the use of confinement to do so • Revise the standards by which a youth is placed on the Redirect Group to only include youth who exhibit egregious behaviors. • Revise the “Use of Segregation Policy” to conform to County Detention Standards.
Mental Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ or contract with qualified mental health professionals to provide mental health services to youth at the facility. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide a mental health assessment for all youth. ○ Develop and implement service plans for all youth with mental health needs.
2602.260 Recreation and Leisure Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjust schedules to provide at least one hour of gym time for all residents. • Develop and implement a method to track youth participation in physical recreation.