

# 2022 Peoria County Juvenile Detention Center Inspection Report

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## **Executive Summary**

The Department of Juvenile Justice conducted an annual inspection of the Peoria County Juvenile Detention Center on August 31, 2022, pursuant to 730 ILCS 5/3-15-2(b). The facility was found to be in compliance with the sections and specific requirements of the 20 Ill. Adm. Code 2602 County Juvenile Detention Standards (“County Detention Standards”).

## **Areas of Non-Compliance**

None.

## **Methodology**

- Interviews Conducted
  - Superintendent Brown
  - Compliance Administrator
  - Assistant Superintendent
  - 1 Supervisor
  - 1 Youth Detention Specialist
  - Social Worker
  - Nurse
  - Educator
  - 4 youth
  
- Documents Reviewed
  - Sample Youth Files (via Odyssey System)
  - Youth Special Group Status Documentation
  - Educator Licenses
  - Daily Schedules
  - Visitation Records
  - Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Audit Report (12/17/19)
  - Security Check Policy
  - Use of Force Policy
  - Handle with Care Training Materials
  - Youth Grievance Policy
  - Youth Grievance Log
  - New Resident Handbook
  - Commissary Sheets
  - Behavior Management Training Manual
  - Behavior Management Policy

## **Overview**

The Peoria County Juvenile Detention Center is a 63-bed facility located in Peoria, Illinois. The facility has three living pods (Pods A, B, and C). Each pod has three separate living spaces surrounding a dayroom. Each pod also has a separate outdoor recreation space, accessible from the pod dayroom. On the day of the on-site inspection, the facility had 22 residents.

The facility has two gyms, one of which contains weight-training equipment and a school area with multiple classrooms. Overall, the facility is in good physical condition. Many walls in the facility are decorated with murals, most of which reflect different portions of the facility cognitive-behavior program.

The facility was found to be in full compliance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) in its most recent formal audit in 2019.

## **Admission Policy and Procedures**

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

The facility ended the practice of conducting strip searches as part of routine practice several years ago, only conducting them when there is an individualized need identified. The facility has an established tracking mechanism for all strip searches that are conducted, including the name of the supervisory staff that approved the search.

The facility has a Youth Orientation Manual that includes a broad overview of programming and rules. Youth receive an orientation, including a Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) orientation by facility staff.

Nursing staff complete physicals for all youth within seven days of admission. Youth medication is approved by the on-call physician. Medication distribution is managed by nursing staff and storage is compliant with County Detention Standards. A dentist is on-site at the facility once per month and conducts a dental exam for youth.

## **Personnel, Staffing and Supervision**

The facility has had difficulty filling open positions over the past year, with only 18 out of 42 budgeting Youth Development Specialist (YDS) positions filled. Administrators have taken measures to address the shortage and were recently granted a short-term waiver from the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts (AOIC) to allow hiring of staff without a four-year degree. While staffing has been a struggle, the facility has been able to maintain required ratios during daytime hours.

The facility maintains an active training program for employees consisting of both online training through Relias and in person education. One YDS stated his most recent trainings included an overview

of the intake process, training on trauma (conducted by someone with the probation department), and de-escalation practice.

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

The facility manages a token economy system. Youth earn points in different behavioral categories throughout time blocks during the day, which in turn are converted into behavior levels once per week. Privileges associated with higher levels include increased items permitted in room, later bedtimes, and access to video games. Youth also earn “coupons” for exhibiting positive behaviors. Coupons can be redeemed through a commissary that contains a variety of items including snacks and treats.

To address negative behavior, the facility uses a timeout system. Timeouts generally last 5-30 minutes, with more egregious behaviors requiring completion of a CBT tool called a “Resident Self Analysis,” which prompts residents to identify irrational thoughts that contributed to inappropriate behavior, as well as more rational beliefs to focus on in similar situations in the future. The facility has an active, intentional process for reviewing the behavior management program through a Behavior Management Committee that meets once per month. The committee includes both facility staff and youth. One youth who was interviewed was about to achieve the highest level and was looking forward to participating in the next meeting.

Youth who engage in egregious behaviors can be assigned to a “Special Group Status (SGS).” Youth on this status are separated from other youth and receive an individualized plan, including a specialized schedule that is signed by the youth. There is a strong internal communication process in place for youth on SGS. Supervisory staff send daily emails to facility administrators and counselors to summarize the youth’s day and list any youth who were confined for more than 30 minutes. Staff document the youth’s daily activities via an “Independent Plan Activity Log” that includes all youth activities, the day and time, and a staff initial. Youth on SGS continue to receive recreation and educational services. Based on the plan, youth receive educational services on their living unit or in the school. On the date of the audit, one youth on SGS was interviewed while he was attending school. The facility holds daily meetings consisting of administrators, mental health staff, and medical staff to review youth on Special Group Status or on a high-risk status. Communication regarding youth on SGS is strong at the facility. While the SGS process at the facility is in compliance with County Detention Standards, there is one area where there could be some enhancement. Namely, the plans youth sign represent a reiteration of behavioral expectations. These plans could be enhanced to include youth-specific assignments from the facility’s cognitive-behavioral programming materials that address targeted thinking and behaviors and enhance youth skills.

In addition to the behavior management program, the facility has several other sources of daily programming for youth. Detention Staff facilitate two focus groups per day. Group topics are assigned via 21-days of lesson plans to match the average length of stay. Groups are facilitated through the school and by YDSs. The facility also has volunteers who provide regular programming. A mentor group visits on Mondays and religious groups conduct programming both in-person and via zoom. Nursing students from Bradley University conduct general health programming. Youth indicated the daily schedule was consistent and everyone knows what to expect every day.

There are no limits to family visits at the facility. Visits are permitted both in-person and via zoom. Families can schedule visits online via Microsoft Bookings, where they can choose from available times and select if they prefer a contact or virtual visit. The facility commitment to unlimited family visits and the easy way families can schedule these visits is commendable.

#### Recommendations

- Incorporate youth-specific interventions into SGS Plans that address target thinking and behaviors to enhance youth skills.

#### Medical and Health Care

Medical services are provided through a contract with Advanced Correctional Healthcare (ACH). The contract includes on-site nursing coverage for 63 hours per week. Nursing staff are present at the facility nine hours per day/seven days per week. All youth receive a physical within seven days of admission. A physician is on-site twice per week and on-call 24-hours. The physician reviews and approves medication prescriptions. Dentistry services are provided once per month through the Peoria Health Department.

#### Mental Health Services

Mental health services are also provided through the contract with ACA. A Qualified Mental Health Professional (QMHP) is required to be on-site 48-hours on provide on-call services. All youth receive a mental health assessment within seven days of admission, which is logged in the electronic medical records system. Individual therapy is available to youth and family therapy has just started. Youth on crisis and on SGS status are seen every day. A psychiatric provider is available for two hours per week via telehealth.

#### Education

There are four educators working at the facility, all employees of the Limestone School District 310. The facility uses a blend of direct instruction and online education through the Edgenuity Credit Recovery System, with direct instruction taking place Mondays-Thursdays and online work taking place on Fridays. School was in session at the time of the inspection. Youth were observed in class with direct instruction taking place. The school schedule consists of 45-minute periods that rotate between Math, Science, History, and English classes. Teachers also facilitate focus groups during the school day. On the day of the inspection the topic was Moral Decision-Making. The Math teacher is a certified special education teacher and does pullouts with youth at the end of the school day. On the day of the inspection there were two youth at the facility with active IEPs.

#### Additional Observations

The youth grievance process is compliant with County Detention Standards. The facility maintains an active tracking mechanism that includes the youth's name, date written, date received, indication if the grievance is considered an emergency grievance, outcome, and name of both the supervisor and

administrative reviewer. Grievances were observed as available during the on-site review and youth indicated they were knowledgeable and trusting of the grievance process.

**Recommendations**

Section	Recommendations
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Incorporate youth-specific interventions into SGS Plans that address target thinking and behaviors to enhance youth skills.</li></ul>