
FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

August 14, 2020



Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

BOARD OF CORRECTIONS — AUGUST 2020

Meeting. The Board of Corrections met on August 7, 2020, through a Zoom video conference. Meeting materials and a video of the meeting may be found on the Department of Corrections (DOC) website.

Introduction. Second Judicial District Director Amanda Milligan provided a welcome and gave an overview of a new program being implemented by the Second District. Prior to COVID-19, the District identified two issues related to treatment services: 1) Treatment and support were frequently not accessible, and 2) There were not enough services or resources available for those who could gain access. In response, the District implemented a program utilizing technology to deliver treatment to individuals at an elevated risk to perpetuate violence and victimization in rural areas. Federal grant funding was used to purchase Web cameras for all case managers, provide Zoom rooms, and provide secure cellular-enabled tablets. A new curriculum was identified and two treatment staff were hired. Preliminary results show that the program has resulted in increased access to treatment services, increased communication with case managers, and an expanded treatment menu, and has removed some barriers to treatment.

Director's Update. DOC Director Dr. Beth Skinner provided a Department update on the following:

- **COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies** — The DOC is continuing its current strategies during the pandemic, including providing updates on the website, videos for families, a hotline for staff and the public to call, two calls a week with wardens, daily calls with the Fort Dodge Facility, updating the master action plan as needed, canceling volunteer activities, canceling in-person visitation, permitting video visitation, and allowing inmates four free O'mails and one free phone call per week. The Director also discussed the following items related to the COVID-19 response:
 - **Admissions and Population Management** — Since May 18, 2020, the DOC has had over 700 admissions from county jails. The prisons are currently 7.9% over capacity, with a population of 7,480. Since March 1, there have been 1,489 parolees and 407 work releases, and the prison population has decreased by over 1,000. Since April 1, the Board of Parole has completed 5,400 reviews. Of those reviews, 2,994 were approved.
 - **Fort Dodge Correctional Facility (FDCF)** — The DOC continues to monitor the situation at FDCF. As of August 7, 2020, there were a total of 354 offenders who tested positive and 32 staff. Of those, 327 offenders and 29 staff have recovered. Director Skinner stated they are seeing a slowing down of the number of positive cases and starting to see some containment.
 - **Additional Information** — Testing and case data is available on the DOC website and provides up-to-date information on offender and staff test information. Up-to-date information may be found [here](#).
- **Governor's Executive Order — Felon Voting Rights** — In response to the Governor's executive order restoring felon voting rights, the DOC has been working with the Iowa Secretary of State (SOS) and the Governor's Office to determine how the list of individuals who have discharged their sentence and are eligible to vote will be communicated to the SOS.

- **Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Funding** — The Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy has allocated \$2.3 million from the Byrne JAG program to the DOC for COVID-19 expenses. The funding will be used for reimbursement of costs including personal protective equipment (PPE), technology costs for remote work, a housing voucher program available to 75 clients for 2 months, and a COVID-19 dashboard to provide predictive modeling for an effective response in the future.

Racial Disparity Report. Director of Research Sarah Fineran provided an overview of the Racial Disparity Report. This report is the Department's first analysis of racial disparity within the DOC. The purpose of the report is to provide data in order to improve any racial disparities within the DOC. The report uses FY 2019 data from the Iowa Corrections Offender Network (ICON). The report looks at several categories of data including work assignments, disciplinary actions, education attainment, apprenticeship services, community supervision violations, and electronic monitoring. The report concluded that there are some elements within correctional supervision where disproportionality is noted, including classification, education attainment, apprenticeship services, discipline, and violations.

The DOC will continue to track and monitor these outcomes to note continual areas for improvement and success. The findings have been shared with the statewide Diversity/Disparity Advisory Board, which conducts an annual Department-wide review of compliance with the DOC's racial disparity policy. Director Skinner is requesting that each warden and district director review data found within this report and consider other programs or practices that may be contributing to disparity. The Director is also requesting that each institution and district provide an action plan with applicable timelines for addressing disparities within their respective regions, outlining current activities as well as any proposed activities to promote equity across the Iowa correctional system.

Budget Update. DOC Fiscal Manager Steve Dick provided the following update on the DOC budget:

- **FY 2020** — The FY 2020 budget is on track to close out the fiscal year in good shape. The DOC was able to use Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) moneys as reimbursement for COVID-19 related expenses, including PPE purchases, thermometers, and overtime. The DOC reallocated extra funds to cover pharmacy costs at the Iowa Medical and Classification Center. The Central Office budget is also in healthy shape, and all funding for county confinement and ICON has been used. Additional funding from the Corrections Education line item will be carried forward to FY 2021. The DOC has been able to save some funding to cover the 25.0% match requirement for FEMA funds, as well as some of the extra county confinement costs.
- **FY 2021** — The FY 2021 appropriated budget is status quo compared to FY 2020, and the DOC is anticipating some shortfalls as a result. The DOC is working through the Governor's Office for additional federal funding and is managing shortfalls at each location in the meantime. The DOC continues to file with FEMA, specifically at FDCF, for any amounts that are spent for COVID-19 purposes.
- **FY 2022** — The FY 2022 budget request is currently in progress and will be presented at the September Board meeting.

Next Meeting. The next Board of Corrections meeting is scheduled for September 11, 2020, at a location to be determined.

LSA Staff Contact: Laura Book (515.205.9275) laura.book@legis.iowa.gov