

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE
Pursuant to P.A. 166 of 2020
Article 2, Section 310

Sec. 310. By March 1, the department shall provide a strategic plan update report to the senate and house appropriations subcommittees on corrections, the senate and house fiscal agencies, the legislative corrections ombudsman, and the state budget office which details the progress being made in achieving the strategic plan of the department. The report shall contain updates on relevant strategic plan objectives, as well as key stats and information about the department's efforts to decrease the overall recidivism rate and promote offender success by ensuring readiness to reenter society.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and the need to reallocate many staff resources during this time, many of the Strategic Plan Objectives were paused. New target dates have been established and work is currently underway to move them forward to meet the revised target dates.

Objective 1.1 - Enhance recruitment strategies and incentives to attract and retain quality staff with a target date of September 30, 2019.

- In 2018, the MDOC began an 18-month credit waiver program that allows new corrections officers to begin their career with the department while pursuing the required college credits.
- The Recruitment division also began conducting open houses at correctional facilities, implemented regional interview sites across the state to save potential employees travel time and expense, and encouraged facility involvement in the recruitment process, with participating facilities distributing recruitment cards for staff to share with job seekers in their communities.
- The MDOC Recruitment division has also adopted effective communication channels. Candidates can now track the status of their application as it goes through the hiring process and recruitment team members reach out to potential recruits via phone or text as an alternative to the standard application system emails.
- They have also established a marketing contract that utilizes social media, in addition to traditional advertising mediums, for a modern recruitment campaign.
- In 2021 a work group has been setup to explore how facilities can be more involved in the recruitment and hiring processes and assist the recruitment team

Objective 1.2 - Establish a Wellness Unit to address overall employee well-being with a target date of June 30, 2019.

- The Department created the MDOC Wellness Program to provide confidential assistance and resources to employees, retirees and their eligible family members.
- The Wellness Unit is comprised of four FTE employees. Three employees are licensed mental health clinicians, with one clinician serving as the Program Manager. All clinicians serve as clinical support for employees. The fourth employee serves as a chaplain for employees and is the designated Chaplain Coordinator. Since the SOM hiring freeze was lifted, the Unit has moved forward with securing the additional requisitioned positions of a third Wellness Coordinator and a Departmental Technician.
- As the MDOC Wellness Program develops, it will also include formal Peer Support and Chaplains' Programs.
- The Wellness Unit is creating a Peer Support Program. The peer support manual has been completed, the application period has closed and we are beginning the interviews and the selection for peer supports across the department. The chaplain program manual is in the final review stages and will start accepting applications for that program in 2021.
- The Wellness team is available 24/7 for confidential consultation, crisis management, and other support services for employees.
- The team was in contact with more than 650 employees, retirees or eligible family members in its first six months.
- In 2020, the Wellness Unit was in contact with 3,584 employees, with 10% of contact calls being received afterhours.

Objective 1.3 - Establish a new employee academy for non-custody employees with a target date of December 31, 2019.

- Our dedicated team of corrections professionals is our greatest asset. That's why it is imperative that we establish classroom-based training to properly prepare all new employees for working in a corrections environment.
- Based on the work of a 2018 Effective Process Improvement and Communications (EPIC) team, which built upon recommendations from a 2017 Lean Process Improvement work group, the Training Division developed a Non-Custody New Employee Training (NCNET) curriculum that will allow new non-custody departmental employees to receive all established training while also providing instructor-driven courses and opportunities for each employee to interact face-to-face with experienced corrections professionals.
- Training will be delivered in a hybrid format that includes both an in-class component and computer-based training programs.

- New non-custody employees will be categorized based on specific training needs and their level of contact with offenders.
- The new employee academy staff have developed curriculum for the academy that will soon be reviewed and approved by leadership. The goal is to have a non-custody academy start in June 2021.

Objective 1.4: Establish a formalized mentoring program for staff with a target date of March 31, 2020. The members of the EPIC team are being identified. NOTE: The target date for this objective has been extended to March 31, 2022.

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, work was not completed on this objective, but it remains an important focus and will be completed by next year.

Objective 2.1: Establish a coaching model to improve interactions with offenders with a target date of December 31, 2020. NOTE: the target date for this objective has been extended to March 31, 2022.

- Moving to a “coaching” style when interacting with offenders is meant to help staff think differently about their professional role and use their expertise to model pro-social behavior and transform the lives of offenders. Michigan was one of just two states in the country to receive a grant through the National Institute of Corrections to assess where the department stands as it relates to coaching and then begin to implement it.
- To assist in effectively using this approach, the department will continue with the roll out of the Motivational Interviewing training and evidence-based supervision tools.

Objective 2.2: Become a trauma-informed department with a target date of June 30, 2020 (NOTE: the target date for this objective has been extended to March 31, 2022).

- The Department received a NIC Technical Assistance grant to implement this. We have created an Advisory Committee and a state workgroup comprised of CFA, FOA, BOA and OS staff. The kick off meeting was held 1/11/2021.

Objective 2.3: Explore ways to refine the department’s employee disciplinary process with a target date of December 31, 2019.

- Established an EPIC Team comprised of employees in various classifications, tasked with reviewing and recommending changes to the department disciplinary process.
- Recommendations for change were made based on the team's collective knowledge/experience, input from employee unions, and responses from employee surveys. Recommendations were reviewed and approved by the Director.

- Team constructed a list of conduct historically handled as work rule violations, which will now be handled as performance and addressed through discussion and counseling.
- An expedited investigation process has been drafted for implementation.
- Employee's will have the ability to accept responsibility for certain types of conduct to shorten the investigation and expedite bringing closure to the discipline process.
- Wardens and administrators will be given additional latitude and authority at the local level to address certain conduct.
- The Employee Handbook and Attachment A of PD 02.03.100 "Employee Discipline" have been revised.
- The department will continue addressing needs in training and educating all employees to better address employee conduct.

Objective 2.4: Define a team and process for ongoing technology review that will enhance staff and offender success with a target date of March 1, 2020.

- The Technology team has been meeting since March 18, 2020. This is an ongoing team and will continue to look at how technology (products/systems) will improve the work done within the department. The team sent a Return to Normal Work survey to all staff on what could how technology would help staff do their jobs. In addition, with the COVID pandemic, additional technology products were added that need to be evaluated. Sub teams were established to review these different products. This includes market research and best practices which will be recommended to the Director in early 2021.
- Throughout 2020, the Technology team focused much of their efforts on enhancing department technology that could assist us in dealing with COVID. Information has been gathered on temperature taking system. There will be three different systems piloted in multiple locations.

Objective 3.1: Provide continuous case management from conviction through discharge with a target date of December 31, 2022.

- COMS FOA and Parole Board Case Management continue to be customized.

Objective 3.2: Develop a communication pathway for relevant information sharing between all administrations and stakeholders with a target date of December 31, 2022.

- COMS Food Service and Healthcare are live and facilitating collaboration between prisoner diets and food service menus, replacing the previously manual process.

Objective 3.3: Redefine the roles and responsibilities of staff pertaining to mentoring, care and case management of offenders with a target date of December 31, 2019 (NOTE: the target date for this objective has been extended to December 31, 2021).

- In February 2019, an EPIC team was established to create a plan to modernize the role of staff, including Prison Counselors, Assistant Resident Unit Supervisors, and Resident Unit Managers, to emphasize the case management of offenders. This focus on case management will help better align resources to set offenders on a long-term path to success.
- A case management pilot was launched in August 2019 at four correctional facilities.
- During the pilot, staff in PC, ARUS and RUM positions focused on case management during a prisoner's incarceration with the intention to follow it through parole and discharge.
- Team collected feedback on the initial pilot and adjusted and expanded it in late 2019 to include two additional facilities. The expanded pilot will run through March 1, 2020.
- The goal of the pilot is to examine the impact of these changes on staff, the offender population, the overall operations of facilities, and the communication between facilities and field offices.
- When the pilot ends, the Correctional Facilities and Field Operations administrations and the EPIC team will review results and make final determinations on position descriptions, training and case management supervision standards before the plan is gradually rolled out to other facilities.
- Additional facilities were added to the pilot. Timeline established for continued roll-out of remaining facilities. Case Management Measurables were established. Rollout plan was put on hold due to COVID.
- The EPIC Team is reconvening on Monday 3/1/2021 to continue rolling out the pilot to additional facilities.

Objective 4.1: Create a program and security classification continuum that outlines placement, from reception to parole, with the target date of September 30, 2022.

- No update for this objective.

Objective 4.2: Align department resources with offenders' risks and needs with a target date of September 30, 2022.

- No update for this objective.

Objective 4.3: Re-evaluate and employ assessment instruments with a focus on reducing offender risk with a target date of September 30, 2020 (NOTE: the target date for this objective has been extended to September 30, 2021).

- The Department uses risk assessment instruments to help identify offender needs and the programs that will meet those needs. In order to ensure offenders are placed in the proper programs to set them up for success, the MDOC needs to evaluate these assessments, to make sure they are evidence-based. A permanent group of employees have been working on this project to review assessments and plan to implement those changes in 2021. They are also looking at implementing additional processes to ensure the consistency and effectiveness of the tools the MDOC has now, while also looking at adding specialized tools for specific needs.

Objective 5.1: Establish a comprehensive action plan for the care and management of the mentally ill, aging, and disabled offender population with a target date of September 30, 2021.

- No update for this objective.

Objective 5.2: Continue to safely reduce the use of segregation with a target date of June 30, 2019.

- The department has long believed in the reduced usage of segregation and the diversion of all seriously mentally ill prisoners from segregation.
- An EPIC committee which had been tasked with looking at the use of segregation came up with the Start program, which has now been implemented at three facilities, Ionia and Oaks Correctional facilities and the Marquette Branch Prison.
- Start is a therapeutic housing unit and program which teaches prisoners life and personal skills to help them avoid behaviors that require escalating security precautions, as well as address their overall mental health needs.
- Since this process began, more than 150 segregation beds have been removed from the system and the number of seriously mentally ill prisoners in segregation has plummeted.
- CFA is looking at other facilities to bring the Start program to, in order to continue building upon the success that's been achieved so far.
- There will be continued tracking of those in segregation to make sure they are in for the right reasons, and if they should be removed, that it happens as soon as possible.
- A new Segregation EPIC Team will be launching on Monday, March 2, 2021 to further look at the issue of segregation reform.

Objective 5.3: Expand strategies to better and more consistently manage Security Threat Groups with a target date of March 31, 2021 (NOTE: the target date for this objective has been extended to December 31, 2021.)

- No update for this objective.

Objective 5.4: Further develop strategies to manage the transgender population with a target date of December 31, 2020 (NOTE: the target date for this objective has been extended to September 30, 2021.)

- An EPIC team was established and began meeting on January 21, 2021. This team meets weekly and is making good progress. The team is reviewing current policies and procedures and is developing additional strategies to safely manage and care for this population. They are looking at gender issues and housing/property issues, and will be discussing clinical benefits, surgeries and housing post-surgery. They will also be developing a training module for employees.

Objective 5.5: Implement the Women's Huron Valley strategic plan with a target date of December 31, 2022.

- The Women's Huron Valley continue to make progress in meeting their strategic plan objectives.

Objective 6.1: Evaluate the effectiveness of offender programs and supervision strategies with a target date of March 31, 2022.

- Workgroup will be established. Co-Chairs have been identified.

Objective 6.2: Develop and implement a Medication Assisted Treatment program with a target date of June 30, 2020.

- A proposal was developed and four pilot locations identified. Training was provided. Policies, procedures, protocols and offender paperwork were developed along with a training module. The Department is refining the process for referral and treatment.
- The MAT program includes buprenorphine, often known as suboxone. By providing suboxone to prisoners suffering from addiction, along with cognitive behavioral therapy and recovery support, prisoners will have a much better chance at success. Using these treatments in concert with one another increase the likelihood of long-term recovery and may reduce recidivism.

Objective 6.3: Expand the opportunities to foster offender success with a target date of September 30, 2019.

- MDOC's Offender Success Administration has made great strides in expanding opportunities for offenders both pre- and post-release through a combination of groundbreaking educational opportunities and key programming focused on cultivating a positive support structure for returning citizens.
- Construction of the Vocational Village site at Women's Huron Valley Correctional ramped up in 2019 and the new 44,000-square-foot facility is expected to be completed in early 2020.

- The village will offer training and certifications in cosmetology, 3D printing, robotics, carpentry, commercial truck driving, forklift operation, computer coding, horticulture, and food technology and hospitality management.
- Post-secondary educational opportunities also grew in 2019, with the addition of three new Pell sites; Lakeland, Gus Harrison, and Central Michigan Correctional Facilities.
- Sienna Heights University and Calvin University were awarded federal Pell grants to support prisoner post-secondary education which they can begin using in 2021.
- The Department is completing work on a “Reentering Learner’s” Model to support the Governor’s 60 by ‘30 pledge.
- The Offender Success Administration is exploring additional programming related to citizenship and life skills, including the use of virtual reality.
- The MTU schoolhouse will open in March of 2021, expanding programming at the original vocational village.
- The MDOC has expanded the use of Fidelity Bonding to support offender hiring.
- The MDOC is exploring a major partnership in relation to a new diesel mechanic career and technical education program.

Objective 7.1: Establish a mentoring program for parolees with a target date of September 30, 2020 (NOTE: the target date for this objective has been extended to June 30, 2021).

- A workgroup comprised of FOA and OS staff was created. Together they worked to develop a Michigan Mentoring Model, comprised of three categories (1) The Core Mentoring Model, (2) Mentor Program Forms, and (3) Mentor Training. This workgroup presented their proposed program to Director Washington on 1/4/2021. Once approved, messaging will be coordinated with the Public Information Office. Long term planning would include coordinating mentoring activities in CFA facilities to ensure a seamless transition of the offender back into the community.

Objective 7.2: Further develop risk-based strategies to guide recommendations, supervision and resources with a target date of December 31, 2021.

- No update for this objective.

Objective 7.3: Expand investment in female offender programs with a target date of June 30, 2020 (NOTE: the target date for this objective has been extended to September 30, 2021).

- A Female Offender EPIC Team has been established.

- Through this objective, the plan is to expand investments in community-based female offender programs. The goal is to provide services with an emphasis on addressing trauma and cognitive issues as we work with these local partners.
- These evidence-based services are also meant to acknowledging gender-based differences and the pathways through which females enter the criminal justice system. They will also address risks and needs, provide social supports with a focus on offender success. The plan to meet this objective continues into 2021 with the formation of an EPIC Team, which began meeting in January 2021, to assist in addressing community-based resources.

Objective 7.4: Apply the offender success model to probation with a target date of March 31, 2021 (NOTE: the target date for this objective has been extended to December 31, 2021)

- Workgroup will be established. Co-Chairs have been identified.

RECIDIVISM AND OFFENDER SUCCESS

- The MDOC recently reported an updated recidivism rate of 26.6%, marking the lowest level of recidivism in Michigan's history. This accomplishment is the result of the department's focus on evidence-based practices and offender success over the last five years and has been a departmentwide effort. Key steps include properly assessing the risks and needs of offenders, developing and offering effective cognitive programming to address specific behaviors, and providing more opportunities for vocational and post-secondary classes. Even while dealing with the challenges of COVID-19, we had over 1,200 prisoners complete a vocational program and 10,000 prisoners complete career readiness soft skills training. In 2020, the MDOC had a record low number of parolees returned to prison for committing a new crime (508) and record low number returned for technical violations of parole (1,109). The MDOC will continue to look for additional opportunities to foster Offender Success and reduce the recidivism rate over the coming year.