

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2020

## PROGRESS REPORT



**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**

**Committed to Protect, Dedicated to Success**



## Letter from the director

We entered 2020 with a strong focus on the objectives laid out for the second year of our Strategic Plan, and within a few months, we became consumed with battling a global pandemic.

While 2020 was a year we won't soon forget and required a lot of our focus, it shouldn't be lost how much work everyone did to continue to further the goals of our strategic plan.

In one case, we married a strategic plan objective with fighting the pandemic and transformed our team focused on enhancing department technology, into one that looked at ways technology could assist us in dealing with covid. But we also worked hard on other goals and objectives as well. Those included securing grants from state and national partners to help improve staff interactions with offenders and to help offenders better navigate life on the outside.

The MDOC began implementing a Medication Assisted Treatment program and the groundwork has been laid to establish a mentoring program for parolees later this year.

We also began making progress toward our goal of becoming a trauma informed department and managing the transgender population.

There is still more to be done and I am proud of the work that's been accomplished in 2020 and now that spirit and drive will carry us forward into 2021.



**Heidi E. Washington**

**Director**



# Snapshot of our Success in 2020



**26.7%**

**Recidivism rate. The lowest in state history.**

**33,618**

**Prisoner population**



**62%**

**Employment rate for Vocational Village graduates**

**689**

**MDOC employees hired**





## COVID-19 Response

While effort on our strategic plan objectives continued in 2020, there was a great focus on combating the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The MDOC was proactive and aggressive in its approach to the pandemic, beginning with planning of new procedures, policies, logistics and operations before there were even any COVID-19 cases in the state, much less the prison system.

When the first cases were detected, the MDOC was ready and had ample supplies of PPE and testing equipment. Within two months of the first positive prisoner case, Michigan became the second state in the country to test every prisoner and continued to do testing throughout the pandemic.

In-person visits were suspended, transfers were drastically reduced, and the Parole Board and staff worked overtime to consider all eligible cases. The healthcare staff worked diligently to care for prisoners and conduct testing. The Emergency Management section worked hard behind the scenes ensuring facilities had ample supplies of PPE, testing supplies and more. The Offender Success staff worked to keep programming going so paroles could continue. Field staff had to completely adapt to a new way of supervising offenders without having an office to work in. MSI converted factories to make PPE, production of cleaning supplies and soap were greatly increased. A dedicated team worked to make video visitation a reality. Corrections officers and their facility co-workers learned to do their jobs amidst a pandemic, wearing PPE and dealing with COVID-positive prisoners. Non-custody staff stepped in to fill roles they normally do not do to keep the facilities running.

Former corrections officers who now work elsewhere in the department raised their hand and volunteered to go back inside and fill in for officers who were unable to work due to COVID. The ARU, E RT, FOA Agents and Staff, and CTOs all also stepped in to work inside at various times around the state when needed.

By the end of 2020, more than a half million COVID tests had been done between prisoners and staff and more than 8,000 prisoners were paroled.

But sadly, we lost four employees due to COVID in 2020. Their lives and their dedication to public service will always be remembered. Our thoughts and prayers go out to their families, friends and all those they knew, as it does for the more than 100 prisoners who also lost their lives in 2020 from COVID.

After a year of so much hard work, pain and sorrow, the year ended on a bright note, with the facility staff beginning to become vaccinated. Within a few weeks, the first prisoner vaccines began as well, giving hope to a better, safer and healthier 2021.



# Invest



## Objective 1.4

### Establish a formalized mentoring program for staff with a target date of March 31, 2020.

Our employees are our greatest asset. And the department has listened in both conversations with staff and in employee surveys results that there is a need and an interest in assisting employees in their career growth within the MDOC.

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

There has always been informal mentoring that has taken place amongst employees in the department. But the feeling is that a more formalized mentoring program will have the ability to aid in the growth and success of all employees. The idea behind this objective is that mentoring employees is crucial to personal development and positive growth. Mentoring employees increases their sense of ownership, loyalty and engagement.

The plan to meet this objective continues into 2021 with the formation of an EPIC Team that will research and formulate a plan so that the Training Division can create a formal mentoring program for staff. This objective will have a new target date of March 31, 2022.



- ✓ **513 Officer Recruit Training Graduates**
- ✓ **71 Recruitment Events**
- ✓ **40 Registered Nurses hired**
- ✓ **309 officers were hired through the 18-month credit waiver program**
- ✓ **50 have successfully fulfilled their college requirements within their 18-month deferral period.**





# Enhance

## Objective 2.1

### **Establish a coaching model to improve interactions with offenders with a target date of December 31, 2020.**

Moving from a “referee” style 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. This will put Michigan at the forefront of a national movement toward such a system of coaching, which is very exciting.

You can learn more about the coaching model by listening to a past episode of the Field Days podcast with the individual who developed the system, Dr. Brian Lovins, at <https://soundcloud.com/field-days/referees-vs-coaches>.

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. This objective will have a new target date of March 31, 2022.





## Objective 2.2



### **Become a trauma-informed department with a target date of June 30, 2020.**

The department recognizes the impact trauma can have on both our employees and those we supervise. By nature, correctional environments are often trauma-inducing. Trauma is a costly public health problem occurring as a result of violence, abuse, and other emotionally harmful experiences.

Work has begun to become a trauma informed department, which when fully implemented will hopefully help reduce re-traumatization, as well as critical incidents and the use of segregation.

The MDOC has three master trainers and workgroups have been created. Information on trauma is also being integrated into some core programming as well. The plan to meet this objective continues into 2021 with the formation of an EPIC Team. This objective will have a new target date of March 31, 2022.



The Michigan Department of Corrections realizes the impact of trauma on both staff and offenders and is taking steps to become a trauma-informed department. Psychologist Adriane Foster sat down with the Field Day's Podcast in February 2020, to discuss Adverse Childhood Experiences, Trauma, the department's goals. Listen now at <https://soundcloud.com/field-days/trauma-informed-training>

## 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 31, 2020.**

The original objective was aimed at researching and utilizing technology that staff and offenders could utilize but was temporarily converted to a team focused on finding ways technology could be utilized to assist in dealing with the pandemic.

This team looked at a variety of technology for staff to use in facilities during covid, including types of scanning devices for taking temperatures, different chemicals for disinfecting phones and other common technology touchpoints and new technology networks.

Video visitation for prisoners during covid was borne out of this committee and developed in short order. Post-covid, there will be a transition into the kind of technology the team originally was assembled to evaluate.

This collaborative team that focused on covid technology will live on and serve as a Technology Advisory Group, which will bring input from their work areas, and identify and assess emerging technologies and whether can serve the department well.





# Transform



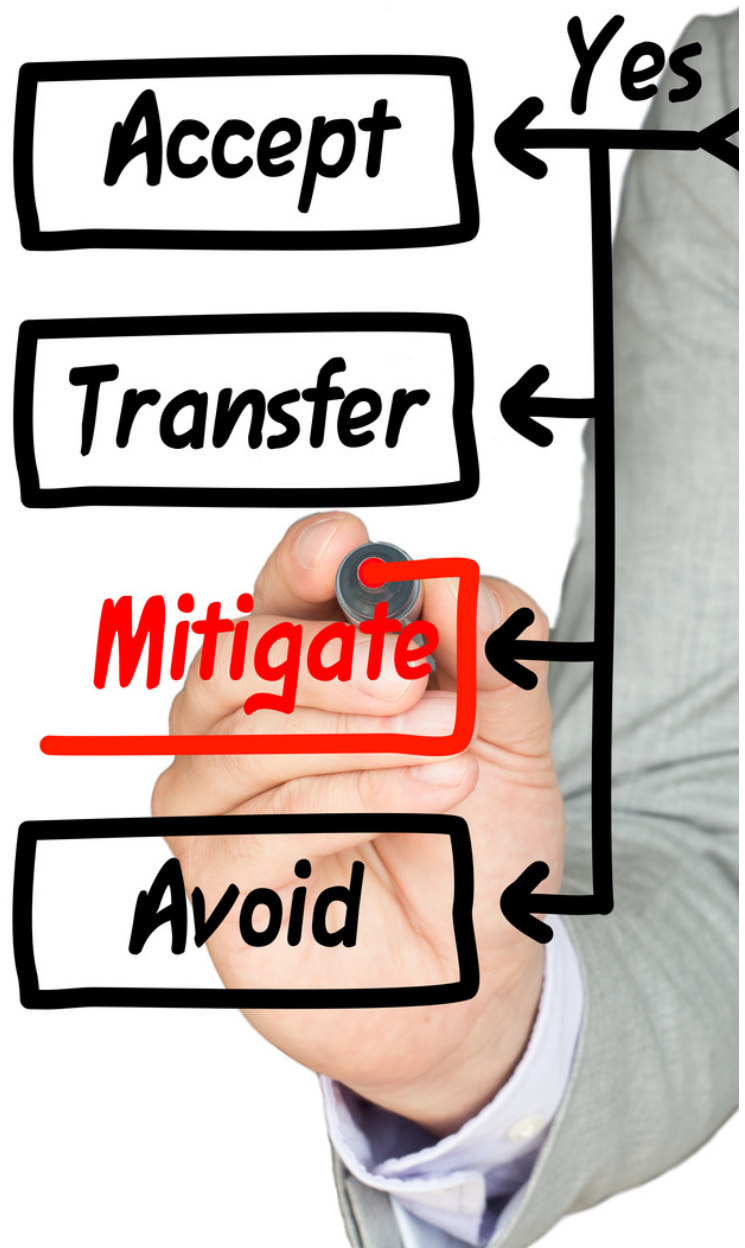
## Objective 4.3

**Re-evaluate and employ assessment instruments with a focus on reducing offender risk with a target date of September 30, 2020.**

Effective programming is a key element in ensuring an offender's success upon release, giving them the tools they need to enter society and not return to a life of crime.

The risk assessment instruments the department uses help to 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 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. An EPIC Team will be established this year to conclude the work of this objective. This objective will have a new target date of September 30, 2021.





# Manage

## Objective 5.4

### **Further develop strategies to manage the transgender population with a target date of December 31, 2020**

Transgender and other gender non-conforming offenders present unique management challenges for correctional institutions, but also for those who supervise them while on parole or probation.

The MDOC has developed a multi-disciplinary team to review its current policy and procedures and is developing additional strategies to safely manage and care for this population. Two workgroups have been set up to focus on distinct issues, one looking at gender issues and the other looking at housing and property issues. Another important component is training for staff and the development of a training module for employees.

An EPIC Team will be established this year to conclude the work of this objective. This objective will have a new target date of September 30, 2021.



# Achieve



## Objective 6.2

### **Develop and implement a Medication Assisted Treatment program with a target date of June 30, 2020.**

The opioid epidemic the country is facing, including in Michigan, has increased the incidents of drugs in the prison system as well as overdose deaths in the community.

As a way to address this serious issue, the MDOC has developed and implemented a Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) program, that 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.

In prisons across the country where MAT is being used, they are seeing reductions in contraband related to suboxone and far fewer overdose deaths upon release from prison.



In November 2019, Governor Gretchen Whitmer and members of the Michigan Opioids Task Force announced Michigan's strategy to combat the opioid crisis. More than 20 percent of incarcerated individuals in Michigan have been identified as having an opioid-use disorder and studies show that those released from incarceration are at a higher risk of overdose and death from opioids when they return home. Learn more about M.A.T with the [\*Ending Addiction\*](#) article in the February 2020 Corrections Connection newsletter.



**\*Photo taken pre-pandemic\***





# Manage

## Objective 7.1

### **Establish a mentoring program for parolees with a target date of September 30, 2020.**

For years, the MDOC has had mentoring programs for offenders, but recognized a need to have a more uniform and focused plan to guide these efforts.

An EPIC team worked to establish a mentoring program for parolees, as well as a host of rules, guidelines, systems and policies to ensure its success. Mentoring services are designed to be used in conjunction with, and in support of, established and approved reentry plans and wraparound services in the community and are not intended as a substitute for any MDOC-approved programming or focused supervision strategies.

Having offenders have the ability to talk with and learn from those in their community like them or who have been through things they have dealt with will provide far greater chances as success. The team is modeling Michigan's plan of success mentoring programs by the Idaho Department of Corrections and expects to begin piloting the program later this year. This objective will have a new target date of June 30, 2021.



# Objective 7.3



## Expand investment in female offender programs with a target date of June 30, 2020



**\*Photo taken pre-pandemic\***

In the summer of 2019, for the first time ever, Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility began hosting a farmers market. The Green Valley Market proved to be a success with WHV horticultural program students and the WHV staff who made up the market's customer base, and expanding on the lessons the students were learning to include running a successful enterprise. Despite the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic brought in 2020, WHV Horticulture Instructor Ellen Baron managed to keep the Green Market up and running. Hear Instructor Baron talk about the facility farmers market on the [2019 Green Valley Farmers Market episode](#) of the Field Days Podcast.

While the department has continued to add programs at Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility to assist the female population they're on a path to success, we know even more can be done. We are excited to begin having women at WHV began learning and working at their new Vocational Village which became operation in 2021.

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 acknowledge 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, to assist in addressing community-based resources.

This objective will have a new target date of September 30, 2021.



# A Look Ahead



So much was accomplished in 2020 despite the COVID-19 pandemic through the hard work of staff across the department. As we head into 2021, there is still much more to be done.

The 2021 objectives include:

- **Objective 5.1** - Establish a comprehensive action plan for the care and management of the mentally ill, aging, and disabled offender populations with a target date of September 30, 2021.
- **Objective 5.3** - Expand strategies to better and more consistently manage Security Threat Groups with a target date of March 31, 2021.
- **Objective 7.2** - Further develop risk-based strategies to guide recommendations, supervision and resources with a target date of December 31, 2021.
- **Objective 7.4** - Apply the offender success model to probation with a target date of December 31, 2021.

The following objectives from 2020 were unfortunately delayed as the department responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, but will now be carried into 2021 so the work started by our dedicated staff can be completed as envisioned.

- **Objective 4.3** - Re-evaluate and employ assessment instruments with a focus on reducing offender risk with a target date of September 30, 2021.
- **Objective 5.4** - Further develop strategies to manage the transgender population with a target date of September 30, 2021.
- **Objective 7.1** - Establish a mentoring program for parolees with a target date of June 30, 2021.
- **Objective 7.3** - Expand investment in female offender programs with a target date of September 30, 2021.



