

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

ANNUAL

REPORT

2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| PAGE | |
|------|--|
| 01 | A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER Framing the mission and charting the path ahead. |
| 02 | INVESTING IN OUR TEAM Building a stronger, workforce through recruitment, diversity, and wellness. |
| 08 | WOMEN'S SERVICES Reshaping the future of women's corrections. |
| 11 | DIVISION OF OPERATIONS Leveraging technology and training to protect staff and incarcerated individuals. |
| 14 | SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION Protecting staff and facilities through intelligence and investigations. |
| 15 | DIVISION OF PROGRAMS AND REINTEGRATION SERVICES Expanding reentry programs that reduce recidivism. |
| 18 | VOCATIONAL SERVICES Providing meaningful work experience to support reentry. |
| 19 | HEALTHCARE, MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE Advancing care, treatment, and recovery. |
| 21 | STAYING CONNECTED Accessing NJDOC online, on social media, and across our communities. |

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

Growth, determination, innovation, and accomplishment defined the work of the New Jersey Department of Corrections this past year and I thank the men and women of the Department, whose integrity, dedication and commitment fulfill our critical mission. Even on its best day, corrections is challenging. Dedicated custody and civilian staff, investigators, senior staff and the leadership team show up day-in and day-out, to do a job that few could do, and do it well. Their tremendous work is transforming lives and enhancing the public safety of this great state.

In 2024, we recognized the importance of creating lasting and meaningful reform that prioritized the operation of safe and secure facilities while establishing an environment that addresses the treatment and needs of the population, ensuring that individuals who leave the custody of the NJDOC are poised for successful integration into the community. Together, we advanced the priorities and mission of the Department, including continued efforts to provide dignity, safety, and resources to our female population; investing in staff through recruitment and retention of a well-trained, healthy and diverse workforce; ensuring educational and programming resources and wraparound services for the population entrusted to our care; making critical investments in safety and security technologies to enhance existing efforts; investing in infrastructure to ensure necessary and appropriate conditions; and enhancing communication through shift overlap, expanded email access, newsletters and online resources.

Throughout 2024, we remained steadfast in our commitment to strengthening our essential community and building mission-critical relationships within the NJDOC, among staff, the population, and external stakeholders to support our staff, the population and the citizens of New Jersey. In doing so, we remain committed to advancing policies, procedures and innovations that elevate this Department as a national leader and model for prison management, safety, security, reform and reintegration.

Victoria L. Kuhn, Esq., Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Corrections

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS MISSION

The mission of NJDOC is to advance public safety and promote successful reintegration in a dignified, safe, secure, rehabilitative, and gender-informed environment, supported by a professional, trained, and diverse workforce, enhanced by community engagement.

INVESTING IN OUR TEAM

Strategic Recruitment and Staff Development

The New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) advanced its commitment to long-term workforce development by strengthening recruitment, training, and community engagement. Through a coordinated strategy, the Department **expanded its candidate pipelines to meet operational demands** and proactively address officer attrition. These initiatives were essential in stabilizing personnel levels and maintaining a highly professional workforce across all facilities.

Training Academy Milestones

Academy enrollment showed steady growth throughout the year, reflecting sustained interest in correctional careers. In 2024, the Department graduated 310 Correctional Police Officers through the State Basic Course.

- **Class 255 (February):** 86 graduates
- **Class 256 (August):** 96 graduates
- **Class 257 (September):** 128 graduates (graduation held in 2025)

Class 256 marked the introduction of a non-residential training option. This flexible option is credited with expanding access, reducing barriers to entry, and supporting retention by providing trainees with increased flexibility.

Compensation and Retention Initiatives

The ratification of a **new four-year contract at the end of 2023** provided the competitive salary structure necessary to attract and retain qualified personnel. Contractual increases applied to Correctional Police Officers provide salaries and benefits that reflect the essential work they provide and position the Department of Corrections as more competitive employer. By aligning compensation with the demands of the public safety sector, the Department remains positioned to attract and retain experienced staff.



INVESTING IN OUR TEAM

Targeted Recruitment Outreach

The Department expanded its reach through a strategic, multi-layered recruitment initiative, successfully positioning NJDOC as a premier employer in a highly competitive market. This **data-informed approach** combined targeted digital marketing and expanded social media outreach with community-based events. Specific efforts were directed toward recruiting women, military personnel, and other groups to ensure a diverse and professional workforce.

Employee Wellness and Support

The Department continued to prioritize the health and well-being of its workforce by offering mental health resources, fostering staff engagement, and deepening partnerships with external organizations. These initiatives focused on building long-term resilience, increasing health awareness, and ensuring streamlined access to confidential assistance for all personnel.

- **Critical Incident Stress Management:** The Department continued to advance its Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) program, providing timely, confidential support to employees affected by critical incidents and occupational stress.
- **Resiliency Program Officers:** In 2024, the Department maintained a statewide network of more than 80 Resiliency Program Officers and eight Master Resiliency Program Officers, supporting employee wellness through peer-based engagement and access to resources.
- **4BlueNJ Partnership:** The Department continued collaboration with 4BlueNJ, a division of Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care. This partnership ensures that NJDOC staff have reliable, confidential access to specialized peer-support services.



INVESTING IN OUR TEAM



In 2024, the Department recognized **Correctional Officer Day** by honoring the professionalism, dedication, and service of correctional police officers across the state. The day acknowledged the critical role officers play in maintaining safe and secure operations while upholding the Department's commitment to public safety, accountability, and professionalism.

The Department also established a new tradition with the inaugural **Civilian Day Awards**, a ceremony dedicated to recognizing the essential contributions of the civilian workforce. Held at Central Office in Trenton, the event honored staff across multiple service categories, underscoring the vital role these professionals play in supporting daily operations and the Department's broader public safety mission.



INVESTING IN OUR TEAM



HISPANIC HERITAGE EVENT



OVERDOSE AWARENESS



MEN'S HEALTH SUMMIT



WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



BLACK HISTORY MONTH SUMMIT



LGBTQIA+ PRIDE PICNIC



BREAST CANCER AWARENESS



MILITARY SERVICE APPRECIATION DAY

INVESTING IN OUR TEAM

The Department continued to recognize and support our military service members and veterans through the **Military Services Liaison Committee (MSLC)** employee resource group. In 2024, the Military Services Liaison Committee participated in **four Stand Down events** in support of at-risk and unhoused veterans and coordinated a supply drive that shipped over **80 boxes of materials** to deployed military units. The Office also supported the planning and delivery of a **Military Appreciation event in October 2024** that recognized the service of more than 60 active-duty and veteran NJDOC employees.



WOMEN'S SERVICES

NEW WOMEN'S CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

The Department continued to advance women's corrections reform through sustained operational stability and proactive transition planning for the replacement of the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility (EMCF). Throughout this period, the Department prioritized the continuity of essential services, ensuring that custody staffing, reentry coordination, medical care, and specialized programming remained consistent. These efforts ensured that the incarcerated population maintained access to vital support services as long-range infrastructure planning progressed.

Milestones in Development of a New Women's Facility

The Department reached several pivotal milestones in the development of a modern women's correctional facility. The State formally designated Chesterfield, Burlington County, as the future site, providing a clear geographic and operational framework for the project. Key progress indicators included:

- **Two Requests for Proposals (RFPs)** were issued for architectural and engineering services, marking the transition into the formal design and site-planning phases.
- **The State appropriated \$90 million** to support early-phase design, construction, infrastructure preparation, and project mobilization, positioning the Department to advance the next stage of facility development in 2025.



WOMEN'S SERVICES

REFORMING WOMEN'S CORRECTIONS

Consent Decree: Achieving Substantial Compliance

The Department is pleased to report a major milestone in its commitment to operational reform and transparency. Since the Consent Decree's effective date in August 2021, the Federal Monitor has consistently documented the NJDOC's attained and maintained substantial compliance across a significant number of settlement provisions.

Key Regulatory Milestones:

- **Motion to Terminate:** Based on the Department's sustained performance, the NJDOC and the U.S. Department of Justice reached a mutual agreement to file a joint motion with the Federal Court to terminate five total sections of the Consent Decree.
- **Judicial Recognition:** This motion—which was approved by the Court in November 2024—serves as formal recognition that the Department has met and maintained the rigorous standards required by the Agreement for more than three years.
- **Continued Commitment:** While this marks the sunsetting of numerous provisions, the Department remains steadfastly dedicated to achieving and sustaining compliance for all remaining paragraphs. Our focus continues to be the health, safety, and welfare of the incarcerated female population through permanent, meaningful reform.

Safety and Oversight

The **PREA Compliance Unit** successfully completed all outstanding audits and trained over 500 volunteers in sexual safety standards. These efforts were complemented by a strengthened partnership with the Special Investigations Division, which optimized incident response tracking and documentation practices.

Empowerment Through Design: The Pratt Institute Partnership

The Department finalized foundational planning for the Design Studio program, an innovative collaboration with the Pratt Institute. This initiative is a cornerstone of the **future women's correctional system**, designed to provide participants with high-level instruction in advanced manufacturing, digital design, and fabrication.

WOMEN'S SERVICES

EDNA MAHAN CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

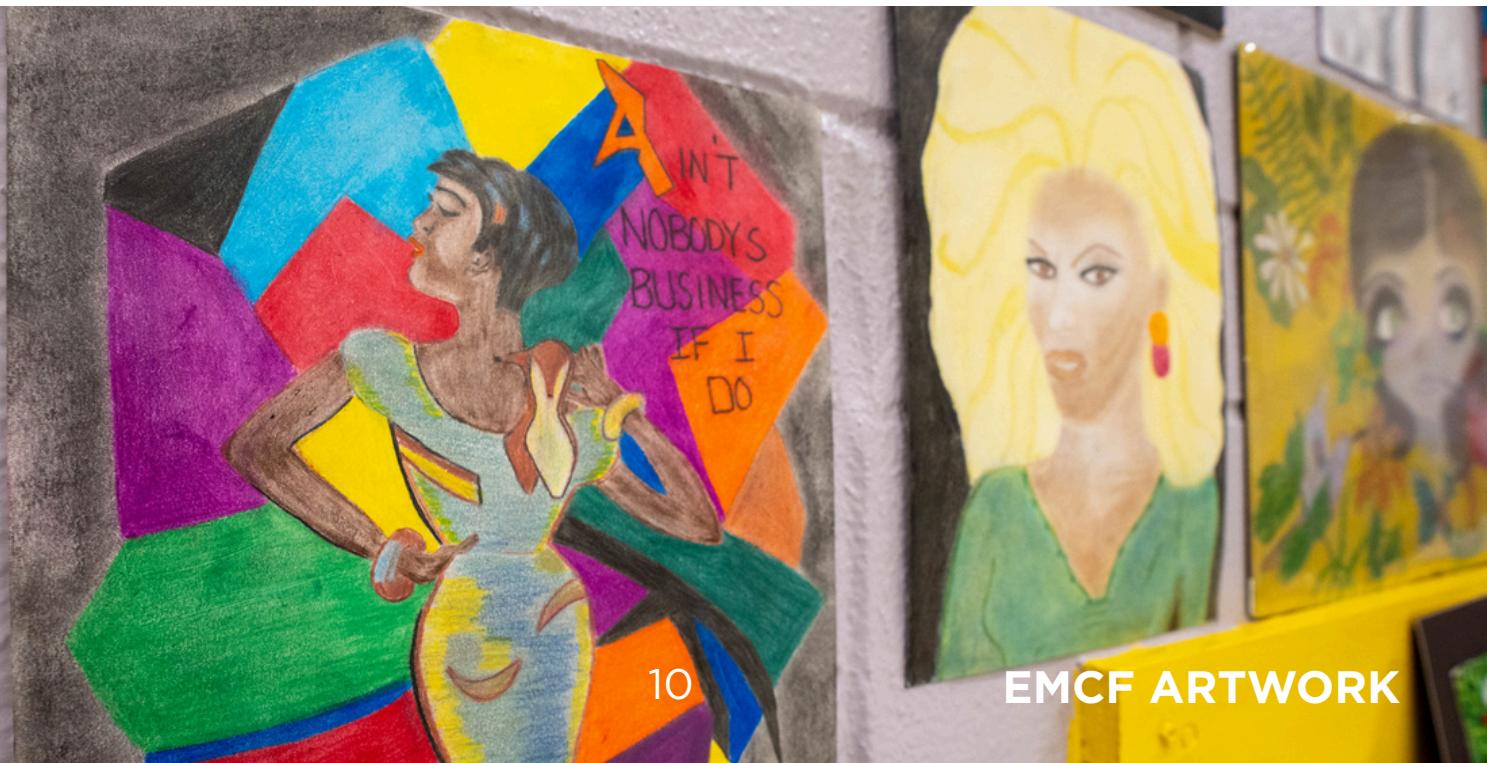
Trauma-Responsive Care

The Department's Division of Programs and Reintegration Services (DPRS) enhanced its trauma-informed protocols through coordinated initiatives, ensuring a high standard of clinical and operational oversight.

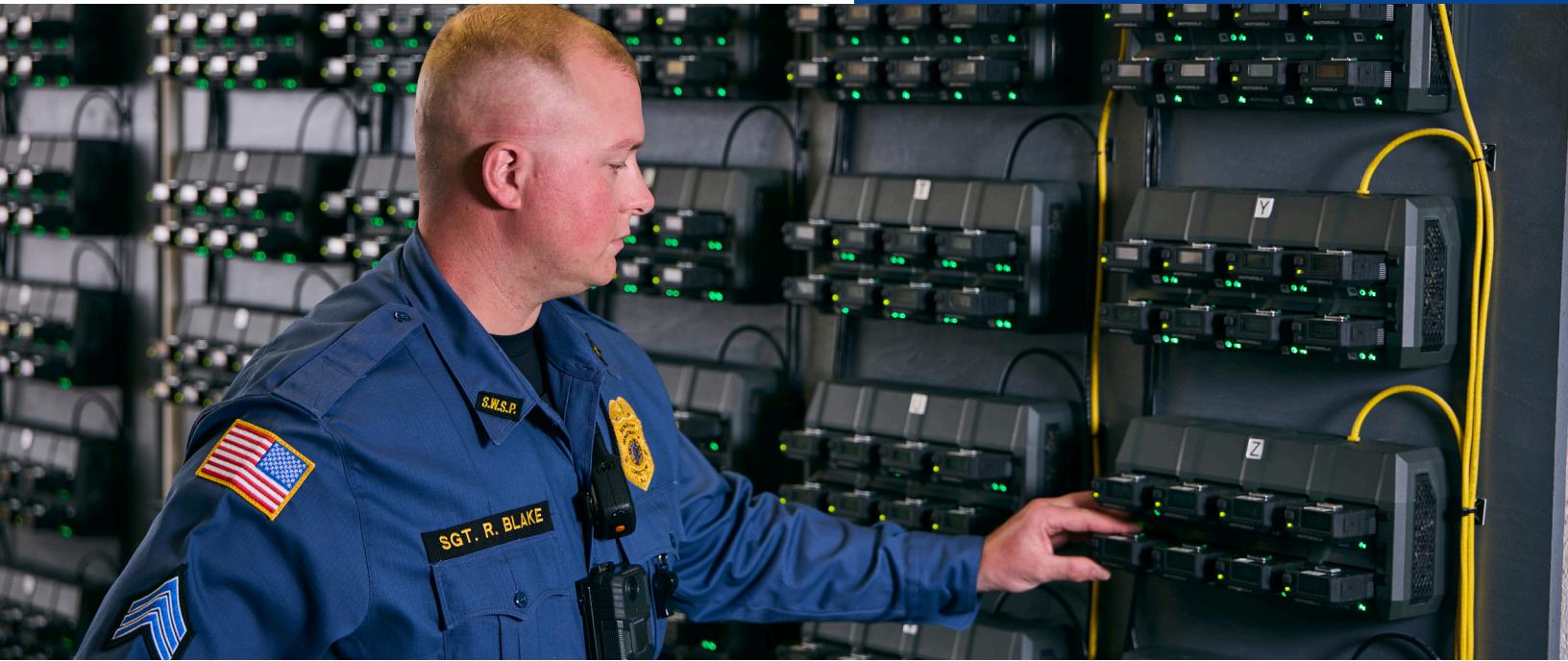
Civic Leadership and Creative Achievement

In 2024, the Department saw an expansion of creative and civic initiatives that empower incarcerated individuals to engage meaningfully with the broader community.

- **Award-Winning Journalism:** Perceptions Reimagined, the EMCF newsletter, earned national recognition with its first Stillwater Award, securing second place for "New Prison Publication of the Year" from the Prison Journalism Project.
- **Public Artistic Exhibition:** In the fall of 2024, the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey featured work by six incarcerated artists in its exhibition, Something to Hold on to: Art and the Carceral System, highlighting the rehabilitative power of creative expression.
- **Civic Contributions:** Participants collaborated with the Board of Trustees, NJDOC Administration, and community stakeholders to draft criminal justice reform recommendations. These insights directly informed the strategic planning sessions of the New Jersey Community and Corrections Working Summit, providing the population with a voice in the future of correctional policy.



DIVISION OF OPERATIONS



Throughout 2024, the Department advanced its operational infrastructure by investing in sophisticated tools and implementing rigorous oversight measures. These initiatives have reinforced safety, transparency, and institutional continuity across all correctional facilities and specialized units.

Body-Worn Camera Implementation and Oversight

The Department reached a major milestone in transparency and officer safety with the full implementation of the Body-Worn Camera (BWC) Program statewide. This initiative ensures a higher standard of accountability for both staff and the population.

- **Modernization:** Legacy equipment was upgraded to the latest hardware to guarantee recording reliability, secure data storage, and consistent evidence retention.
- **Rigorous Auditing:** To maintain systemwide integrity, Division leadership conducted quarterly facility audits. These reviews confirmed that camera placement, functionality, and field-of-coverage consistently align with the Department's stringent operational and safety standards.

Pilot Program for Contraband Detection

Institutional safety was further strengthened through the deployment of modernized contraband detection technology designed to intercept illicit substances before they enter facilities.

DIVISION OF OPERATIONS

- **Statewide Pilot Success:** The Department launched a Mail Screening Technology Pilot, utilizing specialized scanning devices capable of **detecting liquid, powder, and chemically treated mail**. This technology not only prevents contraband from entering the perimeter but also significantly reduces the risk of accidental exposure for mailroom personnel.
- **Mail Scanning Results:** During the pilot period, the Department also employed mail scanning technology that identified over **5,000 anomalies, resulting in nearly 300 presumptive positive detections**. Intercepted substances included synthetic cannabinoids, methamphetamines, buprenorphine, and hazardous pesticides.
- **Long-Term Reform:** The data generated by this pilot has informed comprehensive mail-handling reforms, reinforcing a proactive, prevention-focused approach to contraband control.

Shift Modernization and Supervisory Continuity

To enhance institutional readiness and communication, the Department reinstated structured custody line-ups and established a formalized 10-minute shift overlap during shift transitions. This strategic transition window has proven critical in maintaining seamless operational continuity through knowledge transfer and administrative oversight.



DIVISION OF OPERATIONS

Logistics and Fleet Modernization

The Department managed an extensive logistical network in 2024, facilitating 33,076 incarcerated person transports and covering 1,832,181 miles. These movements were essential for medical appointments, court appearances, and institutional transfers.

Special Operations Group and Emergency Readiness

Throughout 2024, the **Special Operations Group (SOG) maintained an elite level of tactical readiness**, providing essential support for institutional security and public safety across all nine correctional facilities. Beyond facility perimeters, SOG served as a vital partner to local, county, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. The unit's operational capacity remained focused on rapid response to security incidents, utility failures, and external emergencies, bolstered by modernized equipment and expanded mission-specific training.

Interdiction and Search Operations

SOG played a central role in the Department's contraband-interdiction strategy through a series of high-impact deployments. **SOG conducted extensive search operations inside and outside Department facilities** resulted in significant contraband recoveries, directly enhancing the safety of staff and the incarcerated population.

Technological Surveillance and Aerial Support

The Department continued to invest in advanced technology to augment traditional security measures. In 2024, the dedicated drone response team, supported by four certified pilots, provided critical aerial surveillance and perimeter security, allowing for real-time intelligence gathering during complex operations.



SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS

Special Investigations Division

In 2024, the Special Investigations Division (SID) strengthened investigative integrity, sexual safety compliance, and internal accountability across the Department. Expanded case management, targeted training, and enhanced supervisory oversight supported compliance under the Edna Mahan Consent Decree while sustaining timely investigative services statewide.

Targeted Searches and Evidence Collection

- In 2024, operations and investigations staff coordinated targeted threat suppression searches and conducted multiple mass search operations across facilities. These efforts contributed to SID's total reported evidence collection of 22,810 contraband items.

Contraband Interdiction

- Of the total evidence collected, 7,820 items were suspected narcotics, reflecting continued focus on disrupting illicit substances within secured environments.

Cellphone Seizures

- As a result of enhanced enforcement strategies and coordinated operations, 267 cellular phones were confiscated from inside secured perimeters. These initiatives resulted in a 133 percent increase in cellphone confiscations from 2023 to 2024.



Division of Programs and Reintegration Services

Strategic Reintegration and Workforce Development

In 2024, the Department advanced its mission to support successful reintegration by refining social services, workforce development, and educational initiatives. By enhancing social services, the Department continues to foster long-term public safety through the empowerment of individuals returning to their communities.

Securing vital documentation is a critical first step in the reentry process. To ensure that individuals are prepared for employment and housing upon release, the Department expanded its identification support services:

- **Inter-Agency Collaboration:** The Department successfully reestablished direct coordination with local Social Security Administration offices. This liaison role has streamlined the application process for duplicate Social Security cards, ensuring that returning citizens possess the necessary credentials for immediate workforce entry.
- **Strategic Personnel Deployment:** Three regional Social Workers were deployed to high-demand facilities—Garden State Correctional Facility, Northern State Prison, and South Woods State Prison—to expedite identification interviews.

The Vital Role of Volunteer Services

The Office of Volunteer Services (OVS) remains essential to the delivery of diverse institutional programming. Between January and September 2024, OVS **processed 469 volunteer clearance applications**. These efforts supported vital services in religious programming, NJLEAD (New Jersey Locally Empowered, Accountable, and Determined), community programs, and victim and trauma services, ensuring that a robust network of community support remains active across all facilities.

Workforce Readiness

The Providing Academic and Career Employment (P.A.C.E.) Unit successfully expanded the Department's hiring network and post-release follow-up capabilities:

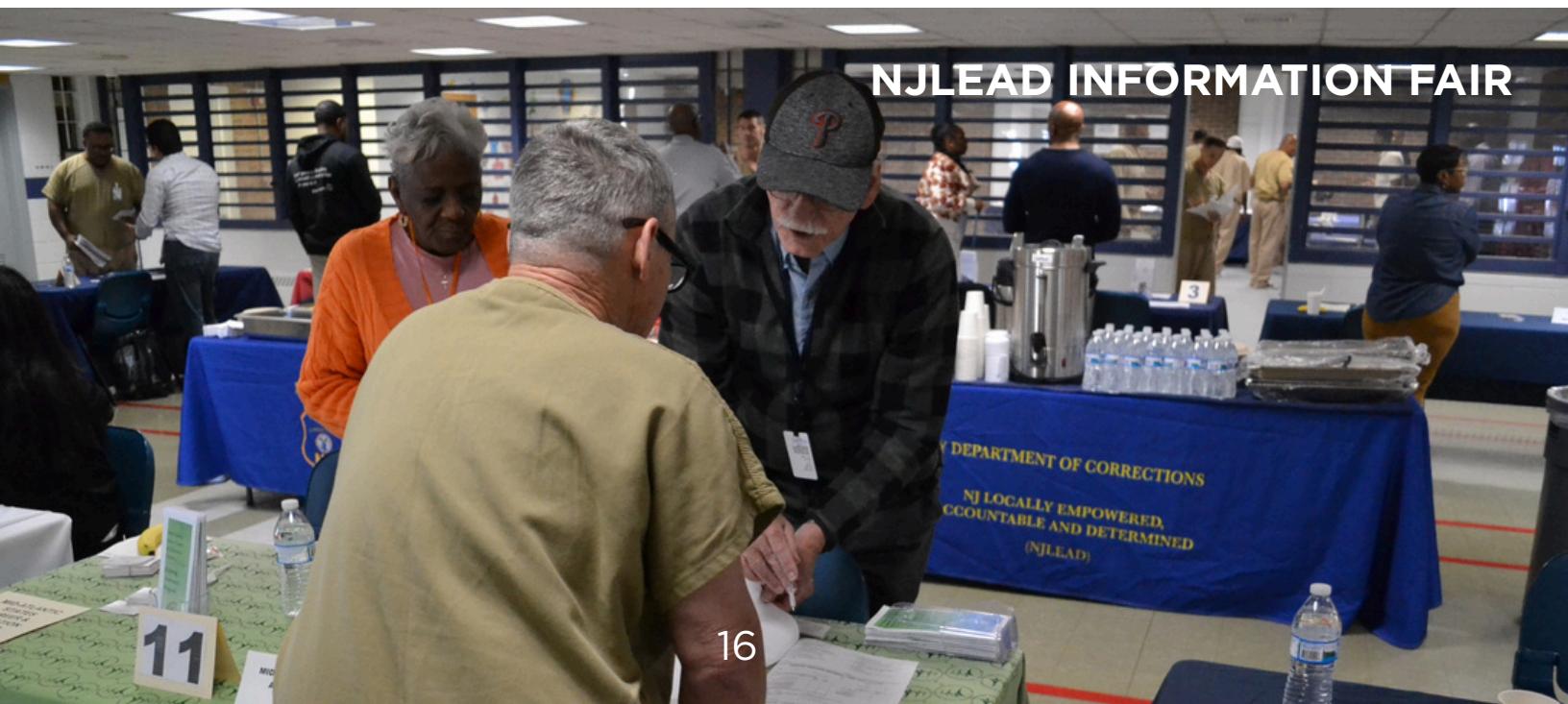
- Employment specialists engaged with the business community through 13 job fairs, adding 44 new employers to the hiring network. This brought the total database to 338 employers committed to considering returning citizens in their employment.

Division of Programs and Reintegration Services

NJLEAD Innovation

The NJLEAD initiative saw significant growth. In addition to maintaining its three core service categories, the program introduced a fourth category focused on innovative pre-release preparation and vocational training. This expansion increased both the scale and accountability of the program, providing more tailored opportunities for individuals to gain market-aligned skills prior to their release.

- **Expanded Partnership Network:** The number of grant-funded partners grew from 32 in FY23 to 39 in FY24, allowing for a wider community reach and more specialized reentry services.
- **Service Milestones:** Through mid-2024, NJLEAD partners recorded significant engagement metrics, including 2,992 pre-release and 8,509 post-release contacts within the state prison system, as well as over 1,400 contacts across county jail facilities.
- **NJLEAD Summit and Outreach:** The annual NJLEAD Summit was held in July 2024 at Jones Farm to award FY24 funding and align strategic goals. Additionally, the Department hosted 13 Reentry Information Fairs across five institutions, engaging 1,415 incarcerated individuals to provide direct access to post-release resources.



Division of Programs and Reintegration Services

Educational Services: Academic Excellence and Curriculum Reform

The Office of Educational Services (OES) continued to drive academic achievement, surpassing prior-year benchmarks in high school and equivalency attainment.

- **Secondary Education Success:** Under the School Facilities Education Act, 26 high school diplomas were awarded in 2024. This represents a 62% graduation rate, reflecting a steady two-percent increase over the previous year.

Higher Education Programs

The New Jersey Scholarship and Transformative Education Program (NJ-STEP) is a statewide partnership that provides college coursework to eligible individuals while incarcerated and supports continued education after release. The program connects higher education institutions with correctional facilities to create a seamless pathway from prison to the community.

Raritan Valley Community College - Associate Degree Enrollment

- In 2024, enrollment included 303 participants in Spring, 343 in Summer, and 337 in Fall. A total of 74 individuals completed or received associate degree requirements.

Rutgers University - Bachelor's Degree Enrollment

- Enrollment totaled 91 students in Spring 2024 and 132 students in both Summer and Fall 2024.



Vocational Services

DEPTCOR

DEPTCOR is New Jersey's correctional state-use industry program operating within the New Jersey Department of Corrections. The program provides training in the production, assembly, and manufacture of goods and services by incarcerated individuals within state correctional facilities. Participation is voluntary and designed to support the development of employable skills and positive work habits. Products and services are sold exclusively to state and local government agencies.

Workforce Training and Employment

DEPTCOR factories and service industries provide training opportunities to more than 1,000 incarcerated individuals annually. Through structured work assignments, participants gain hands-on experience that supports post-release employment readiness.

Manufacturing and Service Operations

Through DEPTCOR, incarcerated individuals are trained and employed to manufacture and assemble items including:

- Wooden beach boardwalks
- Lifeguard stands
- Custom sheds up to 12' x 36'
- Picnic tables
- Park benches
- Parking bumpers
- Furniture assembly
- Clothing and textiles
- Printing services
- Sign manufacturing
- License plate manufacturing



HEALTHCARE, MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE

The Department advanced systemwide healthcare delivery in 2024 through compliance improvements, modernization, and expanded access. Coordinated reforms strengthened continuity of care, reduced delays, and improved oversight across medical, mental health, and substance misuse services.

Strategic Oversight and Task Force Progress

The Prevention of Self-Injurious Behavior Task Force, established by Commissioner Kuhn in 2023, continued to advance its mission throughout 2024. The Task Force focused on reviewing and refining programs and practices to mitigate self-harm incidents for both staff and incarcerated individuals. Key accomplishments this year included the implementation of proactive response strategies and the department-wide distribution of suicide prevention and awareness materials, ensuring that critical information is readily available to all personnel and those in state custody.

Visitation Services and Clinical Modernization

The Department prioritized safe, consistent access to family and legal visitation while maintaining institutional security. Population movement protocols were refined to improve accessibility, transparency, and procedural fairness.

Access and Policy Enhancements:

- **Expanded Visitation Access:** Video visitation was expanded, and evening visitation hours were established to better accommodate the schedules of working families.
- **Non-Contact Visitation Options:** Updated policies allow for the strategic use of non-contact visits for eligible individuals, supporting continued family engagement while maintaining institutional order.
- **Expanded Telehealth Services:** Clinical access increased through expanded telehealth supported by a video teleconferencing system in every facility, reducing delays in specialty consultations and routine follow up appointments.

HEALTHCARE, MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE

Medication Management and Substance Use Treatment

- **Drug Diversion Program:** The Drug Diversion Program was enhanced to strengthen controlled medication accountability and high-risk treatment monitoring.
- **Medication for Opioid Use Disorder:** Access to medications for opioid use disorder expanded, including injectable buprenorphine in Restorative Housing Units to reduce behavioral incidents and increase safety.

Policy Advancement and Continuity of Care

- **Chronic Disease Management:** Clinical standards were updated to strengthen continuity of care systemwide.
- **Transgender Healthcare Services:** Services were expanded to align with Medicaid requirements for hormone therapy and surgical evaluation.

Partnerships and Oversight

- **Healthcare Provider Partnership:** The Department continued its statewide partnership with Rutgers University Correctional Health Care for medical, dental, and mental health services.
- **Specialty Care Delivery:** Most care was delivered on site, with hospital and specialty services provided through community partners when medically required.
- **Gift of Life Program:** End of life planning expanded through the Gift of Life organ and tissue donation program for eligible individuals in custody.
- **Performance Oversight:** Regular auditing of key performance indicators ensured timely access to care and adherence to clinical standards.



New Jersey

Department of Corrections

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