

Office of the Sheriff

LOB #220:

SAFE AND SECURE INMATE HOUSING

Purpose

Providing for safe and secure inmate housing is a mandated service governed by the following laws: Virginia Code § 53.1-93; Constitution of Virginia, Article VII, Section 4; Department of Corrections Minimum Standards; JLARC. These laws establish mandates and guidelines for the operation and construction of areas which include, but are not limited to, jails and lockups and any satellite housing facility under the authority of the Sheriff's Office. They also establish guidelines and mandates for the accepted practices for Sheriffs in jurisdictions with jails, lockups and detention facilities. In addition, Virginia Code § 53.1-131.1 allows local jurisdictions to charge incarcerated individuals a per day room and board fee to defray housing costs.

The following laws establish mandates and guidelines for the accepted practices for Sheriff's Offices with areas that include, but are not limited to, jurisdictions with local jails, lockups and detention/correctional facilities. They incorporate all functions within the inmate classification and records branch: Virginia Code §§ 53.1-192-197; 53.1-198-202; 53.1-133; 53.1-113; 53.1-93; 53.1-68; 53.1-80-83; 443F supplement 965 (1977); Part IV, Article V, Code of Virginia Department of Corrections Minimum Standards.

In addition, safe and secure inmate housing is governed by accrediting agencies which include the American Correctional Association, National Commission on Correctional Healthcare, and Virginia Department of Corrections.

Description

The safe and secure housing line of business (confinement) is the largest component of the Sheriff's Office, employing 292 sworn and civilian staff members. Confinement services include the management of the operation of the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center, including four confinement squads. Confinement also manages inmate classification, inmate transportation, and confinement records services. Confinement is also responsible for the operation of the satellite intake office at the Mt. Vernon District Police Station.

Inmates under the authority of the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office are provided with a high quality of care and service including quality food service and health care, access to the courts, contacts with family and friends, and programs designed to develop life skills. Current staffing and average daily population (ADP) trends are assessed annually to determine minimum staffing standards. While the ADP has decreased from 1,228 in FY 2014 to 1,108 in FY 2015, it is impossible to predict the inmate population for any given year.

The facility operates using three primary types of supervision: podular, linear, and direct supervision. Higher security inmates are kept in podular supervision, where a deputy in a control booth observes the activities of five pods of up to 20 inmates each. This approach provides intense supervision of inmates, inmate activities, and security. Linear supervision has from one to five cells holding one inmate in each cell. The five cell blocks open up to a day room. In direct supervision, one deputy is located within the dayroom with up to 48 inmates. That deputy supervises all activities within the housing unit. There are also segregated cells for inmates who are unable to be housed in general population for administrative or disciplinary reasons and for inmates who have medical or mental health issues that require individual housing. Deputies assigned to these areas typically work in pairs because the management of these inmates is more intense and involves more direct contact with the inmates for basic functions.

More than one-third of the inmates are awaiting trial. Some will be found not guilty and released. Others, if sentenced to a term of 12 months or less, will serve their time in the jail. Once they've served their time, they are released back into the community.

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Inmates are classified according to the level of danger they pose. That classification determines their housing, programs, and activities while in the jail. Their days are usually quite busy with deputies ensuring that each inmate is available for his or her individual schedule. About 1,100 meals are prepared and served starting at 4:00 am. Deputies conduct at least six scheduled cell lock-in and lock-out periods; inspect inmates to make sure they are ready for their day's activities; and brief the inmates on their daily schedule for education, drug treatment services, health services, recreation, attorney meetings, court times, religious services and life skills training. This activity leads to more than 16,000 secure door openings every 24 hours. Deputies also have to perform routine inspection of each inmate throughout the day and document their observations. Deputies must continually manage the levels of stress inherent with people that are incarcerated.

Both sworn and civilian Sheriff's Office employees provide the services for safe and secure housing. Sworn deputy sheriffs provide security housing services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, inclusive of holidays. Four squads work 12.5-hour rotating shifts from 6:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and from 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.

Benefits

All services that are a part of providing safe and secure inmate housing are mandated. Ensuring the community members both inside and outside the facilities are safe is the absolute responsibility of the Sheriff's Office. The staff members assigned to this line of business not only ensure that the inmates are kept safe and secure, but that the residents of Fairfax County are protected from the inmate population.

Mandates

Providing for safe and secure inmate housing is mandated by the Code of Virginia and the U.S. Constitution as outlined in the "Purpose" section of this LOB. In addition, this line of business is governed by accrediting agencies which include the American Correctional Association, National Commission on Correctional Healthcare, and Virginia Department of Corrections.

Trends and Challenges

Methods used to manage jails are constantly changing. Federal requirements, state requirements, and professional association certification requirements demand that the agency find the best ways to ensure the safety of the deputies, inmates and residents; provide better constructive treatment for inmates; and ensure the public's safety. Usually, these mandates must be implemented quickly and cannot wait for potential funding in a future budget. The Sheriff's Office can respond to these needs during times of lower populations, but funding must be secured before the populations grow. Unfortunately, population changes cannot be predicted.

Staffing is also an important issue. As vacancies rise, the number of posts that can be managed decrease. Minimum staffing levels must be maintained. The alternative is to use overtime. In FY 2008, the Sheriff's Office seriously overspent its overtime budget when staff vacancies were very high and inmate population was high as well. A review by the County Auditor verified that sworn vacancies and inmate population were the factors that caused the problem. As pointed out in the Academy and Management Assistance LOB, the Sheriff's Office is anticipating a high sworn vacancy rate at every level in the organization over the next few years.

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As part of the Public Safety Staffing Plan, the Sheriff's Office has requested a number of Confinement positions. The services related to many of these positions are already being performed by deputies because of the low inmate population. Should the population trend reverse, many of these services may have to cease. These services are required by accrediting agencies, mandates from state and federal law, and the obligation to provide appropriate health care and security related to that care. The following staffing issues remain to be addressed: overcrowding in female housing areas which was in violation of several ACA standards; security for inmates at the hospital; a Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) position to implement a federal mandate; and support the Sheriff's Intelligence Unit SIU. The SIU position would serve as a central point of contact for all intelligence information and investigations related to gangs, gang members, associate gang members, suspected gang members, security threat groups, security threat individuals and suspected security threat individuals within the ADC. The ADC houses 80-90 gang members on a daily average.

Finally, the security system that operates the locking systems for the inmate doors is antiquated. The oldest portion of the security system was built in 1978. Replacement parts are no longer manufactured and now it is even getting difficult to find replacement parts on secondary markets. The risk of failure grows each year. Although the agency has not experienced an entire system failure, once or twice a month control booths lose their ability to control doors for an extended period of time. At those times, deputies must perform all 16,000 daily door openings one door at a time. At present, a design is underway for a replacement system. Funding is proposed, but not yet provided, in the Capital Improvement Program.

Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
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FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$24,265,478	\$24,338,128	\$25,558,148
Operating Expenses	2,665,626	2,396,312	2,382,265
Total Expenditures	\$26,931,104	\$26,734,440	\$27,940,413
General Fund Revenue	\$11,660,996	\$11,466,570	\$12,678,712
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$15,270,108	\$15,267,870	\$15,261,701
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	294 / 294	294 / 294	292 / 292
Total Positions	294 / 294	294 / 294	292 / 292

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Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Total ADC prisoner days	576,932	527,630	490,767	504,933	522,641
ADC average cost per prisoner day	\$170.13	\$173.56	\$184.89	\$187.39	\$189.89
Prisoner, staff or visitor deaths	0	0	2	0	0

The Fairfax County Sheriff's Office continues to provide safe and secure inmate housing as mandated by law. The Adult Detention Center is the primary facility for managing an average daily population of 970 inmates for FY 2015. This was a decrease from 1,065 in FY 2014. The overall count of 1108, which includes those inmates assigned to the Alternative Incarceration Branch, also decreased proportionately. As much as it is impossible to predict future populations, it is also difficult to identify specific causes for the decline. Therefore, planning and preparing for a count that can fluctuate so significantly is extremely difficult. In line with the decrease in the overall population, the number of prisoner days also declined significantly from 527,630 in FY 2014 to 490,767 in FY 2015.

The primary measures associated with this line of business are those reflective of visitor, staff and inmate safety. For FY 2015, the Sheriff's Office met its goal of zero injuries and contagious disease exposures to visitors and zero injuries and contagious disease exposures to staff. However, the Sheriff's Office did not meet one very critical goal – zero inmate, staff or visitor deaths. For FY 2015, two inmates died while in the custody of the Sheriff's Office. While both deaths were ruled accidental by the Medical Examiner, the Sheriff's Office has used both instances to review policies and make appropriate changes.

While the overall population was down, the cost per prisoner day was slightly elevated. Variable costs such as food and medical declined. However, fixed payroll costs for sworn staff increased so when these costs were spread across a lower population, the per prisoner day rate increased.