



NORTH CAROLINA  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**  
PREVENT. PROTECT. PREPARE

# Prison Reform Update

February 21, 2019

Presented to the Joint Legislative  
Appropriations Subcommittee  
on Justice and Public Safety

# Framework

- ▶ Established Five Workgroups to Focus Efforts in Strategic Manner
  - Enhancing Security Policies and Practices
  - Reducing Contraband in Prison Facilities
  - Increasing Hiring and Retention
  - Improving Training for New and Veteran Employees
  - Improving Communication with Internal and External Stakeholders
- ▶ Established Prison Reform Advisory Board
- ▶ Hired Senior Executive Advisor for Prison Reform

# Enhancing Security Policies and Practices

- ▶ Enhancing sanctions against offenders who assault staff
- ▶ Purchasing radios, batons and pepper spray to fully equip certified staff (correctional officers and case managers) in facilities at all custody levels
- ▶ Piloting personal body alarm “man-down” technology at three facilities
  - Distributed 4,100 whistles to non-certified staff who are currently not assigned radios

# Enhancing Security Policies and Practices

- ▶ Distributed stab resistant vests for 10,000 certified staff
- ▶ Installing more cameras to improve surveillance
  - Nearly 1,150 cameras installed since April 2017, including 300 during last quarter of 2018
- ▶ Conducting unannounced security assessments based on new audit standards
  - Eighteen unannounced assessments conducted in 2018; six conducted in 2019

# Enhancing Security Policies and Practices

- ▶ Reviewing and modifying security policies and procedures
  - Prisons and Correction Enterprises policies reconciled to eliminate discrepancies
  - Offender job and program assignment policy modified and re-issued
  - Restricting deposits to offender accounts by approved visitors
- ▶ Initiating pilot use of tasers for supervisory staff at four close custody prisons
- ▶ Revalidating the offender classification instrument, with technical assistance from the National Institute of Corrections

# Reducing Contraband in Prison Facilities

- ▶ Visiting prisons (federal and state) in other jurisdictions to observe contraband detection strategies
- ▶ Examining all aspects of mailroom operation
- ▶ Utilizing mobile managed access radio frequency technology to detect, intercept and block use of unauthorized cellphones
  - Installing fixed system managed access capability at two other locations
- ▶ Deploying nine portable towers to improve safety and security on facility offender recreation yards

# Improving Training for New and Veteran Employees

- ▶ Expanded Basic Correctional Officer curriculum from four to six weeks in January 2019
- ▶ Continuing to schedule new correctional officers in Basic Training during second week on the job
- ▶ Continuing implementation of Field Training Officer Program, with nearly 450 FTOs selected and trained
  - Nearly 1,000 new hires have completed the 120-hour hands-on training program

# Improving Training for New and Veteran Employees

- ▶ Conducting situational awareness in-service training for all Prisons staff.
  - Completed 4-hour situational awareness training for nearly 300 Correction Enterprises staff.
- ▶ Prioritizing leadership and supervisory training and adding more classes to accommodate need
  - Completed two-day training for facility leadership in February 2019
  - Conducted training for more than 600 supervisory staff in 2018



# Increasing Hiring and Retention

- ▶ Modifying hiring process and developing targeted recruitment strategies for facilities with highest vacancy rates
- ▶ Utilizing exit survey data to develop retention initiatives and planning new employee engagement
- ▶ Promoting professional development activities and improving workplace morale through a new Facility Enhancement Fund
- ▶ Implemented a Prison Employee Recognition Program to honor employees for exemplary service on the job and in the community

# Improving Communication with Internal and External Stakeholders

- ▶ Piloting use of email accounts by correctional officers at two facilities
- ▶ Promoting corrections as a profession through expanded use of social and digital media, including updated recruitment material
- ▶ Increasing frequency of communication between facility heads and Prisons management



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# Closing Remarks/Questions

For more information, visit the Prison Reform page on the DPS  
website: [www.ncdps.gov](http://www.ncdps.gov)