

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>STATE OF VERMONT</b> <b>AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES</b> <b>DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS</b></p>	<p><b>Title:</b> <b>MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Page 1 of 4</b></p>						
<p><b>Chapter:</b> <b>Commissioner</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b># 01</b></p>	<p><b>Supersedes:</b> #03, dated 03/09/1983, #04, dated 03/30/1984, and #52, 03/16/2009</p>						
<p><b>Attachments, Forms &amp; Companion Documents:</b> All attachments, forms, and companion documents will be available on the DOC website.</p>								
<p><b>Local Procedure(s) Required:</b> No <b>Applicability:</b> All staff (including contractors and volunteers) <b>Security Level:</b> "B" – Anyone may have access to this document.</p>								
<p><b>Approved:</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; width: 33%;"><u>SIGNED</u></td> <td style="text-align: center; width: 33%;"><u>05/31/2016</u></td> <td style="text-align: center; width: 33%;"><u>06/14/16</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Lisa Menard, Commissioner</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Date Signed</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Date Effective</td> </tr> </table>			<u>SIGNED</u>	<u>05/31/2016</u>	<u>06/14/16</u>	Lisa Menard, Commissioner	Date Signed	Date Effective
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**PURPOSE**

The Vermont Department of Correction’s (DOC’s) mission and philosophy should inform every aspect of the DOC’s policies, programs, and practices, and serve as a guiding principle and foundation of accountability for staff as they carry out their daily job duties.

**PHILOSOPHY**

The DOC’s Vision:

*To be valued by the citizens of Vermont as a partner in prevention, research, management, and intervention of criminal behavior.*

The DOC’s Mission:

*In partnership with the community, we support safe communities by providing leadership in crime prevention, repairing the harm done, addressing the needs of*

*crime victims, ensuring offender accountability for criminal acts, and managing the risk posed by offenders.*

The DOC's Values:

*Responsibility, Commitment, Integrity, Judgment, Creativity, Enthusiasm, Compassion*

The DOC's Principles:

*We believe:*

- *In the inherent worth and dignity of all individuals;*
- *In treating people with respect and dignity;*
- *That people can change;*
- *In individual empowerment;*
- *In fairness throughout decision making;*
- *In non-violent conflict resolution;*
- *In the value of individual, cultural, and racial diversity;*
- *In respect for the liberty interests, rights, and entitlements of the individual;*
- *In maintaining a safe and secure environment;*
- *In the placement of offenders in the least restrictive environment consistent with public safety and offense severity;*
- *That community participation and support are essential for the successful delivery of correctional services;*
- *That victims have the right to have an active role in determining how their needs can best be met;*
- *That offenders are responsible, to the extent possible, to repair harm done to victims and the community;*
- *In professional self-improvement; and*
- *In teamwork and the process of continuous improvement.*

It is the goal of the DOC to promote safe and supported communities by providing services to individuals who are under the DOC's custody and care, while always preserving and fostering their human dignity.

All individuals are created equal, and as such, possess inherent worth and dignity, which entitles them to be treated with respect. The DOC values individual, cultural, and racial diversity, and fosters an environment in which everyone can express themselves freely and respectfully. The DOC recognizes all justice-involved individuals as worthy of respect. In line with the DOC philosophy that people can change, the DOC works with offenders to accept responsibility for the harm they have done to victims and the community and to repair that harm, to the extent possible. To successfully achieve this goal, victims have the opportunity to be engaged in determining how their needs can best be met.

The DOC is committed to the preservation of individual liberty interests, rights, and entitlements, and is tasked with maintaining safe, supportive, and secure correctional facilities. It meets these dual objectives by adhering to the principles of fairness and non-violent conflict resolution, and supervising offenders in the least restrictive environment consistent with public safety and severity of risk.

The DOC recognizes the research surrounding gender responsiveness in the criminal justice system. This research finds that gender makes a difference in terms of an offender's profile and pathway to crime. It identifies that gender plays a role in how offenders respond to incarceration and community supervision. As such, the DOC utilizes gender responsive practices that take into consideration the characteristics of one's gender.

The DOC understands trauma and its impacts, and continues to remain informed regarding the correlation of increased traumatic experiences within the criminal-justice involved population and its implications for how operational services are delivered, including the incorporation of evidence-based, trauma-informed practices over time.

The DOC contributes to Vermont's safe and supportive communities. One measure of that goal is the rate at which people who have come in contact with the criminal justice system recidivate. Recidivism is a measure of offenders who, after release from a correctional facility, receive a new term of imprisonment within three years.

The DOC's goal is for recidivism rates to go down, but cannot achieve this goal on its own. For its part, the DOC tackles this objective through the comprehensive provision of correctional services. This approach includes: facility and field supervision; a holistic and collaborative approach to offender case management and planning; the use of risk and needs reducing services; community and restorative justice; and health services. Beyond that, the DOC is largely dependent on the cooperation of offenders working towards their successful reentry into the community. In addition, successful outcomes necessitate the mutual efforts of, and coordination with, courts, law enforcement, community partners, and families. Risk and needs reducing services, community programs, and community supports, which are essential parts of offenders' case plans, are generally provided by community partners.

Community and family support greatly improves the likelihood of offenders successfully reintegrating into society. To bolster this support, the DOC helps individuals and families identify public and community services designed to help them meet their needs.

## **AUTHORITY**

28 V.S.A. § 1; 28 V.S.A. § 2A; 3 V.S.A. § 2311

## **REFERENCE**

Vermont Agency of Human Services One Agency Strategic Plan, January 2016 – January 2019

## **POLICY**

This directive outlines the DOC's mission and philosophy. As such, it delineates the evidence and principles on which the foundations of the DOC are built, and establishes a framework by which every DOC policy and practice should be judged. The vision, mission, principles, and philosophy in this document shall inform staff as they carry out their daily job duties and serve them as a guiding doctrine. Any directive or practice that stands in conflict with the tenets expressed in this document should be closely examined to see if it is consistent with the DOC's mission and philosophy, and if found lacking, appropriate steps should be taken to ensure it is not at odds with the DOC's goals.

## **PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY**

The DOC is committed to continuous performance accountability. To that end, the DOC constantly collects and analyzes data and stays informed about current best practices, which inform changes in policy and practices. These changes are designed to improve staff performance and the services provided to offenders.

On an ongoing basis, the DOC compiles statistics on population indicators which are used to measure progress towards legislatively set population outcomes. This data is published annually by DOC, along with other information about its programs, services, and performance.