

Department of Corrections
Town Hall Meeting Responses
May 15, 2013

Responses to the questions and comments made at the May 15, 2013 Town Hall Meeting are below. We have done our best to provide a response without making it too long or complicated. In several instances, we included a link to a document that provides more information. We also recognize that our answers may not satisfy the participant. This does not mean that the Department does not value the comment. All of the comments are given serious consideration and weighed against the current constraints of the Department. In the course of our planning, we will review public input and make changes, where appropriate, to the operations of the Department.

We are thankful for your participation and look forward to future dialogue at the September 11, 2013 meeting.

1. Can the Department do a cost analysis for the training and replacement of temporary CO's?

The Department is working with the Department of Human Resources on this data.

2. What are the program options for offenders who are past their minimum still incarcerated?
There are offenders that do not have constructive use of their time.

The Department currently offers curriculum activities in substance abuse, parenting, employment and education. These programs are largely non- mandated services in most facilities. In addition, there are a variety of volunteer activities which include a range of self-help meetings, recreational activities like basketball, volley ball, special activities like comedian Rusty DeWees or music, bible study, and yoga or mediation are also often available.

3. What does the Department do to teach offenders about the importance of good nutrition and how their food choices impact other parts of their life?

The Health Services Division, by contract, had Correct Care Solutions institute a nurse educator function in each facility. The nurse educator is responsible for group and individual patient sessions: nutrition and diet are included as topics. When patients are seen for routine health visits they are asked about diet, counseled accordingly and given nutrition information. Individuals with specific medical conditions- diabetes, heart disease, nutritional impairments (over and under) etc. are given even more specific information which could be in writing or verbally. It is important to remember that food choice (good or bad) is still a right, even when in prison.

4. What is the update on detainee issue that was discussed in the Legislature?

The Legislature directed the Corrections Oversight Committee (COC) to focus on this issue during its meeting this year. Over the summer and fall, the COC will take testimony and evaluate data in the hopes of formalizing a plan for action during the 20914 Legislative Session. The Department and the COC will work with the Council of State Governments on this issue.

5. Can you post a template for people to prepare public comments?

Yes. Please see the attached document which outlines the rules and tips for making public comments.

6. What is the status of posting more real time data on the website?

The Department is in the process of redesigning its website. During that process, we will assess the information currently available and work towards adding information. This process will take 6-9 months. We do not have plans to make any major additions to our current website during that time.

7. Does the Department plan to conduct any formal evaluations of their programs? The studies published in Facts & Figures are out of date.

The Department is in the process of preparing for an updated risk reduction program structure and curriculum. We do not have plans to conduct any formal evaluations of the programs until the transition is completed and we have begun to use the Correctional Program Checklist consistently. The Correctional Program Checklist will assist the VT DOC in assuring that the Department is appropriately targeting risk reduction services and providing fidelity to the delivery of those services.

8. Can the Department provide the research related the Evidence Based Programs it provides?

The Department plans to implement the Correctional Program Checklist, based upon the Correctional Program Assessment Inventory, to demonstrate adherence to the effective correctional program principles. These principles are cited in numerous sites including National Institute of Corrections, Bureau of Justice Administration and have been demonstrated to be effective in meta-analysis (notably, Washington Institute of Public Policy).

The specific curriculum identified to date have been endorsed and/or studied by the National Institute of Corrections, Washington Institute of Public Policy and/or the University of Cincinnati.

Examples include:

- Thinking for a Change v3.0 -National Institute of Corrections
- Aggression Interruption – Washington Institute of Public Policy
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy – Substance Abuse – University of Cincinnati
- Criminal Conduct and Substance Abuse – Wanberg & Milkman (2001)

9. Why are the sanctions for furlough violations different across the state? Example was a sanction for no-alcohol.

The Department has sanctioning guidelines for violating behaviors. All returns are reviewed by the Operations Manager to make sure staff is following these guidelines. When an office sanctions someone outside of the guidelines (which is allowed), we follow-up to understand the rationale for the decision.

10. Are there any creative performances planned at facilities? Can the Department share the schedule?

From time to time, and generally in cooperation with the residence base at each facility, the Department does bring in recreational entertainment for the residents. In general, this is funded and approved by the residents. Examples include the ME2 Orchestra and Rustee Dewees., which have been or will be featured on the media. Due to security concerns and space constraints, these are generally not open to the public.

11. What industries are available to Women at CRCF?

We currently have a Textile Industry at Chittenden.

12. What employment services are available to offenders?

Primarily, we refer offenders to services through the Department of Labor and Vocational Rehabilitation.

13. How are programs accessible to people with disabilities?

Accommodations are made for anyone interested in working or participating in programs in the facility. If an individual has a disability we are required to make reasonable accommodations for them. This falls under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Department of Corrections
Town Hall Meeting
Public Comment Guidelines

The Town Hall Meeting is an opportunity for community member to ask questions and/or make comments to the Department. In order to make it fair for all who participate, we have designed the following process.

General Rules:

- Please sign in and indicate you want to make a comment. This will help with the flow of the meeting.
- You have 3 minutes to make a comment.
- Comments /questions should not be about individual cases. If you need to ask a specific question about a family member please see the Department of Corrections staff person at the location.
- Answers to questions will be provided in writing and posted on the Department of Corrections Website. If you do not have internet access, you can contact Monica Weeber at 802-951-5057 to make other arrangements for receiving responses.

Tips:

- Prepare your comment/question in advance.
- Think about writing it on a piece of paper for reference.
- Make sure you can get your main point out in 3 minutes. You do not have time to tell a long story.
- Be as clear and specific and possible.
- Kindly yield your time when the moderator indicates time is up.