

## NYC Department of Correction - Young Adult Plan Update

February 5, 2019

The NYC Department of Correction (DOC) is committed to managing its young adult population in a way that addresses their needs, the foremost of these being their safety. Although the Minimum Standard §1-02(c)(1) requires all young adults (18 to 21 years old) be housed separately from adults (22 years old and older), the Department found that, in attempting to fully meet the Minimum Standard in the summer of 2016, violence among the young adult population sharply increased. In response, the Department began to reimagine a young adult strategy that enabled young adults to be housed safely while still meeting their unique housing and programmatic need, which involved seeking a variance from the Board of Correction Minimum Standard § 1-02(c)(1) in order to house some young adults ages 19-21 with adults ages 22 and up. The Department has defined its directive to house “substantially all young adults” in exclusive young adult housing as those young adults who can safely be housed exclusively with those of their same age group<sup>1</sup>. Based on our prior experience we believe “substantially all” can be quantified as no less than 50% of the general population of young adults (both male and female) at any given time. While the Department aspires to the housing of all young adults with their peers, the total young adults that will be housed with their peers must be contingent on security and programming considerations.

Going forward, the Department will continue to house all 18-year-old male inmates in young adult only housing. The Department will make young adult only housing a priority for males ages 19-21 if they are enrolled or seeking Department of Education related services, or have expressed interest in participating in programming services, and are not housed in a restrictive housing area with less than 14 hours of lock-out time (e.g., Enhanced Supervision Housing). Further, the Department will make appropriate effort to house young adult male inmates ages 19-21 in young adult only housing unless after a case-by-case determination it is determined that a young adult inmate has engaged in violent or assaultive behavior<sup>2</sup> towards staff or other individuals in custody, or engaged in actions that threaten the safety and security of the facility, and would be more safely housed in comingled housing. Although historical violence or assaultive behavior may certainly be a consideration in the housing determination of a young adult, the intention is to respond to specific threats in real time, adjusting the housing assignments of young adults when they pose a threat to the safety of others in their current

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<sup>1</sup> That is, young adults aged 19-21. DOC does not commingle 18 year olds.

<sup>2</sup> In this instance, “assaultive” behavior refers to an intentional act or acts by one individual that causes harm to another individual. Assaultive behavior is frequently violent, though violence is not necessarily assaultive. “Violent” behavior is an act or acts that intends to cause harm. For example, violence can be directed toward oneself or manifested in a failed attempt to assault another.

housing assignment. This may mean moving to another young adult only unit or to a commingled unit. In exceptional circumstances, a young adult with no history of violence may be moved if necessary for the safety and security of the inmate and/or the facility. Conversely, a young adult with a history of violence or assaultive behavior may still be housed in young adult only housing if a safe placement can be determined.

As of January 31, 2019, the Department had 621 male young adult inmates, and 25 female young adult inmates in custody.<sup>3</sup> There were 414 males (67% of the total young adult male population) and 19 females (76% of the total female young adult population) in pure young adult housing units. At the July 2018 Board meeting and in public testimony to City Council, DOC committed to transferring as many young adults as we can safely move to young adult housing units. Details of the Department's work to achieve this goal over the next six months are included within this report.

Over the past several years, the Department has moved away from a one-size-fits-all approach of managing its inmates – whether this means eliminating punitive segregation for young people or implementing innovative programs for men and women – because the needs of different individuals in our custody must be addressed individually. The same idea applies to young adults – while the young person's age is a primary factor, it cannot be the only determining factor in addressing his/her most appropriate housing. Other needs, such as security, programming, and medical/mental health, must be considered as part of the comprehensive view of the young person and must be incorporated into his/her housing placement. Regardless of whether a young person is housed with other young adults or with adults, the person's safety, educational, and programming needs must be addressed. Below, the Department describes work that has been done to improve these aspects of a young person's time in its custody and plans to further improve and enhance its approach to this uniquely challenging population.

### **Housing Plan and Movement of Young Adults**

**Housing and Recreation:** As of October 1, 2018, all adolescents in the Department's custody were transitioned to the off-island Horizon facility. Moving adolescents into a dedicated facility will provide youthful offenders with support and guidance in a juvenile justice model. As a result of the Raise the Age mandate, the Department had the opportunity to advance an ongoing plan to increase young adult housing units in the general population, protective

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<sup>3</sup> On January 31, 2019, 576 of the 621 males and 23 of the 25 females are non-special population status and therefore eligible for general population housing.

custody, and new admission settings. In the prior update to the Young Adult Plan, the Department stated an intention of renovating these units and moving some young adults in by November 1, 2019. DOC successfully met this goal. Renovations were designed to provide young adults with a safe and secure environment that met the young adults' recreational needs and was visually reminiscent of spaces in which they were previously housed at GMDC. Renovations included painting, necessary security enhancements, the installations of additional televisions, and the addition of FM transmitters.

The Department is committed to the ongoing evaluation and improvement of its approach to young adults in our care. As of January 31, 67%, of the male young adult population was housed in young adult exclusive units across the following facilities: RNDC, Eric M. Taylor Center (EMTC), George R. Vierno Center (GRVC), and Otis Bantum Correctional Center (OBCC). As anticipated, this percentage increased substantially since the previous Young Adult Plan update (from 52% to 67%), as DOC implemented the updated comprehensive young adult housing and movement plan. Further, DOC will evaluate metrics, monitor housing units, and gather feedback from staff and inmates to identify and address issues amongst the population. Additionally, based on a conversation with Board of Correction staff, DOC recently expanded the young adult progress report to track a wider scope of housing, movement, and program data, and will continue to expand upon these metrics as necessary. (Additional information about program offerings and participation rates for young adults can be found in Appendix A.)

**Initiate New Admission Processing at RNDC for All Young Adults:** Intake can be an overwhelming process, especially for young people. In January 2019, the Department dedicated the intake facility at RNDC to new admission processing of young adult males ages 18-21; this change was made in an effort to reduce stress, target programs and services, and eliminate unnecessary additional transportation. The creation of this dedicated facility enables young people entering DOC care to be admitted directly into young adult housing. Barring any safety, security or behavioral concerns, the Department intends for these newly-admitted young adults to remain in young adult housing.

### **Educational, Recreational, and Program Services**

**Development of Additional Recreation Yards:** The Department recognizes that access to recreational space is crucial to the overall physical and emotional wellness of inmates. In September 2018, the Department began construction on four new recreational yards to enhance outdoor activities for inmates housed at RNDC. These new yards, in addition to a fifth yard that was renovated, will serve approximately 21 housing units, and are in addition to the facility's main yard, the sprung recreation areas, and the newly opened Building 2 south yard, which itself created space for three additional recreational units. Additional recreation space

will increase DOC's ability to provide recreation to more young adults simultaneously and enhance the overall security and safety of all inmates during their recreational time. Construction to these yards have been completed and, weather permitting, the Department is finalizing fence installation and camera placement.

**Expanding Educational Services:** The Department recognizes the significant importance of providing educational services to the young adult population in our custody. This is a serious responsibility and the Department is continuously refining its engagement strategies in order to maximize opportunities for participation and success. As the young adult population transferred out of GMDC and into GRVC, for example, the Department installed additional DOE posts in GRVC's main school to accommodate the increased numbers of young adults housed in that facility. As of January 31, 2019, there were a total of 230 young adults enrolled in East River Academy.<sup>4</sup> The Department currently offers DOE services at RNDC, EMTC, OBCC-ESH, North Infirmary Command (NIC), RMSC, and GRVC.

DOC is working on a collaborative program with the New York State Education Department (NYSED) to establish two new High School Equivalency Testing Centers at off-island facilities which will focus on the administration of the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) for anyone ages 19 or older. DOC and NYSED are working together to train DOC staff to administer these tests and obtain necessary approvals for opening TASC centers

Providing educational opportunities for young adults begins at intake, where all young adults are informed of their right to educational services. Upon expressing their interest, young adults are provided a Request for Educational Services form. The Request for Educational Services form enables the Department to assess the education level of the young adult and allows DOC to provide targeted educational opportunities. Upon completion, the form is submitted to DOE as well as the DOC's Educational Services Unit. If a young adult who has expressed interest in educational services is assigned to a commingled unit, the Department ensures his transfer to a facility where DOE provides those services. Young adults who did not initially express interested in education services can do so at any time, at which point the Department will make every effort to transfer him to a facility with DOE services. By centralizing male young adult intake at RNDC, the Department anticipates being able to streamline young adult educational offerings and better match individuals with their programmatic needs. A DOE-DOC working group was also formed that meets to address issues of school attendance and safety, among others. The Department recognizes that its young adult population has distinct needs that are separate from the adult population and is committed to providing age-appropriate programs and services to all of the young adults in our care.

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<sup>4</sup> Young adult enrollment at East River Academy is as follows: 61 students at the RNDC Annex, 90 students at RNDC Main, 11 students at EMTC, 3 students at NIC, 16 students at OBCC ESH, 35 students at GRVC Main, 10 students at GRVC Secure, and 13 students at RMSC.

The Department remains committed to finding innovative approaches to promoting engagement for students and potential students among the young adult population. Success House, for example, is a program that enables the Department to house young adults currently enrolled in educational programs together so they can live and learn together. The Department has found that housing young adults working towards a common educational goal affords the students an opportunity to foster an intrinsic sense of motivation while providing peer to peer support.

### **Targeted Programming for Young Adults**

DOC's approach to young adult programming combines lessons learned from successful adult programs with young adult specific behavior and engagement strategies. A number of approaches and programs work for both adults and young adults in DOC's care including, but not limited to, the designation of program staff focused on group facilitation, use of technology to advance programming, the addition of specified introductory workforce courses as well as training certifications, and the use of support teams to discuss and track specific populations' behavior. DOC offers a wide variety of program options in both young adult exclusive and commingled units that promote the acquisition of life skills, reentry, and overall behavior modification (see Appendix B). In addition, the Department's current programming offerings include the utilization of tablets, interactive journaling, reentry services, cognitive behavioral workshops, life skills workshops, and family reintegration services.

The Department is committed to the idleness reduction initiative and providing expanded programmatic opportunities to young adults in DOC custody. The Department currently offers 5 hours of programming in the majority of GP housing areas. In addition, the Programs Division is developing a plan to expand programming for young adults in the mental observation, protective custody, and other specialized units.

**Relocation of the YES and PEACE Centers to RNDC:** DOC is in the process of replicating the PEACE and YES Centers previously used at GMDC within RNDC. These spaces will be used to offer incentive and workforce development based programs and services. DOC anticipates that the automotive and print shop spaces, components of workforce development that were previously in the YES center, will be operational by the end of March. The relocated PEACE center, which includes educational spaces as well as workforce development training opportunities, is anticipated to open by the end of April.

**Young Adult Program Engagement:** DOC will continue to use program participation data, surveys, focus groups, and internal/external provider feedback in order to maintain or reengage young adult participation in both programs and educational services. The Department has completed an initial draft of a full menu of programs for young adults that provides

comprehensive information on all programming and services provided by DOC as well as external providers. In addition, DOC has created rededicated a program counselor to the newly created young adult new admissions unit, where all young adults are initially processed. Through this program counselor's work, the Department will further enhance its ability to connect all young adults with targeted services and appropriate programming.

### **Staffing and Staff Training**

DOC recognizes that staff trainings are a critical component of success, particularly with the young adult population. Officers and counselors assigned to young adult programs received the following training sessions in June 2016: Motivational Interviewing, Non-Coercive Approaches to Resolving Conflict (99 staff members trained at each of the sessions), Creating Regulation and Resiliency (70 staff members trained), and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (248 staff members trained). The Department also on-boarded 20 young adult program counselors on June 30, 2015, and, as part of the process, the group spent 30 days at the Academy where they received SCM and Conflict Resolution/Crisis Intervention and training sessions to include trauma-informed care. The Academy continues to provide Safe Crisis Management, Crisis Intervention, Conflict Resolution, and Direct Supervision training in an effort to ensure all active staff are trained in these areas.

Regardless of their post, the Department firmly believes that targeted trainings for all of its staff are key to long term safety and security. The Department began providing all recruits with Mental Health First Aid training in August 2014, Safe Crisis Management (SCM) in 2014, Conflict Resolution/Crisis Intervention since February 2016, and Direct Supervision training since 2016. The first SCM session for officers assigned to adolescents and young adults was held October 2014 and has been continuously provided to in-service staff since that date. Direct Supervision training and Conflict Resolution/Crisis Intervention have been offered to in-service staff since 2017. Finally, Trauma Informed Care training for officers as well as DOC and DOE staff was conducted September 2014 - June 2015 (377 staff members trained).

Since the last update to the Young Adult Plan, DOC provided additional training for 93 officers who work with the young adult population. 15 members of service received training that focused on interpersonal skills and emotional regulation. In addition, 78 members of service attended a two-day training that focused on the directives, required documentation, and daily operations of Second Chance, TRU, ESH, and Secure young adult housing areas.

In an effort to enhance training, DOC has procured consultant services to offer targeted trainings to staff working with young adults that will encompass widely accepted evidence-based practices. In the October 2018 update, the Department stated it planned to implement

an Effective Communication/Motivational Strategies (ECMS) training. In the intervening months, DOC found that a vendor already contacted with the Department was able to provide similar training. In an effort to provide officers and programs staff with enhanced training as quickly as possible, DOC is now moving forward with this second vendor. The training will focus on motivational interviewing targeted to the YA population. The Department anticipates this training will begin in the spring.

### **Identifying, Monitoring, and Reporting to the Board the YAs in Specialized Housing**

DOC currently provides the Board of Corrections (BOC) with regular updates on the use of restrictive housing with the young adult population. Monthly reports to the Board include: Young Adult Housing Monthly Progress Report, Young Adult Restrictive Housing Monthly Report, Young Adult ESH Compliance Unit Report, as well as the Secure Unit Compliance Audit. In addition, DOC periodically provides BOC with an evaluation of ESH housing for young adults.

In the October 2018 Young Adult Plan Update, the Department pledged to provide to BOC on a bi-weekly basis a report of all young adults who are assigned to commingled units, including identifying the special population young adults who are in commingled housing (e.g. the Board's variance allowing the Department to house young adults with adults in specialized mental health units, NIC infirmary, and the West Facility communicable disease unit). The Department has and will continue to use utilize this report to monitor and make adjustments aimed at reducing the number of young adults who are in commingled housing whenever possible.

### **Conclusion**

The Department is committed to the age-appropriate management of its young people, which goes beyond their housing and takes into consideration their safety and other needs, such as educational and programmatic. While the Department aspires to house all its young people together, the standard must be primarily one of safety. The management of young people is a dynamic process, and the Department will continue to be flexible to meet the ever-changing and challenging needs of this population.

## **APPENDIX**

**Appendix A – Young Adult and Commingled Young Adult Program Participation (DOC Young Adult Housing Monthly Progress Report, January 2019. Pages 5-7.)**

**Appendix B – Program Offerings for Young Adults in Young Adult Only Housing (DOC Young Adult Housing Monthly Progress Report, January 2019. Page 4.)**

## APPENDIX A

### Young Adult Housing Monthly Progress Report January 2019

*a. Overview of comingled programming:*

- I. **Internal:** DOC-led programming designed to provide group facilitation, individualized counseling and structured leisure time activities promoting critical thinking and positive behavioral change.
  
- II. **External:** DOC partners with seven nonprofit organizations to support incarcerated individuals pre and post release. During incarceration, DOC partners run classes on topics such as anger management, parenting, relapse prevention, and job readiness. They also offer vocational training to expand participant’s employment opportunities, including industry-recognized certificates in the construction and food industries. After release, they provide assistance with job placement, paid internships, housing, treatment referrals and other services.

*b. External Programming participation for young adults in comingled units*

Facility	# Classes Offered	Young Adult Average Participants	Participation Rate	Topics
<b>AMKC</b>	268	15	31%	-Customer Service -Entrepreneurship -Relapse Prevention -Health and Wellness -Anger Management -Financial Literacy -Work Readiness -Life Skills -Creative Expressions -Parenting -Violence Prevention
<b>BKDC</b>	66	7	44%	-Healthy Relationship -Health and Wellness

<b>EMTC</b>	169	8	17%	-Life Skills -Parenting -Relapse Prevention -Job Placement -Movie Discussion -Financial Literacy -Healthy Relationships -Health and wellness -Life Skills -Trauma Focused
<b>GRVC</b>	118	8	27%	-Anger Management -Creative Writing -Work Readiness -Healthy Relationship -Parenting -Violence Prevention -Peer Support -Film Group -Creative Expressions
<b>MDC</b>	117	7	26%	-Healthy Relationships -Health And Wellness -Communication -Entrepreneurship -Customer Service -Mental Health Awareness -Creative Expression
<b>NIC</b>	36	2	21%	-OSHA -Anger Management -Mental Health Awareness and/or Behavior Modification
<b>OBCC -non-ESH units</b>	238	14	17%	-Creative Expression -Life Skills -Relapse Prevention -CBT -Work Readiness -OSHA -Flagging -Health and Wellness -Anger Management -Parenting Healthy Relationship

				Reentry Workshop
<b>OBCC-ESH</b>	31	4	34%	-Entrepreneurship -Life Skills
<b>RMSC</b>	67	3	31%	-Work Readiness -OSHA -Anger Management -Life Skills
<b>VCBC</b>	167	10	28%	-Anger Management -Health and Wellness -Healthy Relationships -Trauma Focused -Life Skills -Behavior Modification

*c. Internal Programming Participation for young adults in comingled units*

<b>Facility</b>	<b># Classes Offered</b>	<b>Young Adult Average Participants</b>	<b>Participation Rate</b>	<b>Topics</b>
<b>AMKC</b>	87	15	62%	- Health and Wellness -CBT -Life skills
<b>BKDC</b>	35	5	13%	-Case Management -Healthy Relationships -Life Skills -Health and Wellness
<b>EMTC</b>	94	14	31%	-Case Management -Life Skills -CBT

<b>GRVC</b>	99	18	78%	-Anger Management -Healthy Relationships -Health and Wellness -CBT
<b>MDC</b>	120	23	52%	-Healthy Relationships -Health and Wellness -Reentry Workshop -CBT
<b>NIC</b>	42	9	66%	-Healthy Relationships -Life Skills -Case Management -CBT -Substance Use Treatment -Health and Wellness
<b>OBCC -non-ESH units</b>	129	20	30%	-Healthy Relationships -Anger Management -Violence Prevention
<b>OBCC-ESH</b>	70	8	81%	-CBT -Life Skills -Healthy Relationships
<b>RMSC</b>	34	8	74%	-Expression (Arts) -Case Management -Healthy Relationships
<b>VCBC</b>	65	9	25%	-Case Management -Re-entry Workshop -Anger Management-Healthy Relationships -Group Therapy -Seeking Safety

## APPENDIX B

### Young Adult Housing Monthly Progress Report January 2019

1. Programming:

a. For each program offered to young adults at all facilities, provide the number of classes or meetings offered and the average number of participants.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS	# OF SESSIONS	TOTAL # OF PARTICIPANTS <sup>5</sup>	AVAILABLE # OF PARTICIPANTS	AVERAGE # OF PARTICIPANTS	PARTICIPATION RATE
Anger Management	127	497	829	4	60%
Anti Violence/Culture	29	105	118	4	89%
Behavioral Intervention	2	2	17	1	12%
Civic Education	1	6	6	6	100%
Community Meeting	112	572	822	5	70%
Conflict Resolution	24	112	258	5	43%
Creative Arts	186	843	1145	5	74%
Dialectical Behavioral Therapy	164	747	1293	5	58%
Educational Support	14	58	70	4	83%
Educational Tablet	40	73	118	2	62%
Healthy Relationships	55	292	461	5	63%
Horticultural Therapy Program	39	77	114	2	68%
Individual Counseling	258	941	1623	4	58%
Interactive Journaling	141	603	1064	4	57%
Interpersonal Skill Development	137	388	645	3	60%
Leadership Development	267	1394	1892	5	74%
Literacy	6	18	23	3	78%
Mentoring	3	16	16	5	100%
Reentry Services	176	945	1603	5	59%
Structured Recreation	234	1376	1843	6	75%
Youth Communication	155	636	1109	4	57%
Youth Education Development	1	2	2	2	100%

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<sup>5</sup> The total # of participants is not the total # of unique individuals, but represents the total # of participations in each component.

