



ALIGN INITIATIVE

Executive Overview

A 5-Year Commitment to Safer Facilities,
Stronger Operations and Improved Outcomes

Massachusetts Department of Correction
Strategic Plan 2026-2031

Message from the Commissioner



It is with pride and optimism that I share with you the Massachusetts Department of Correction's **Align Initiative**, which reflects the voices, experiences, and expertise of those who know our work best—our staff, incarcerated individuals, partners, and the communities we serve. This *Executive Overview* highlights the effort and commitment the agency has put into defining our priorities, which in turn will guide the work ahead toward meaningful change.

Through a collaborative process, involving over 100 internal and external stakeholders, we identified six core priorities—

Workforce Investment, Safety, Excellence in Health & Wellbeing, Excellence in Operations, Enhance Reentry Assets, and Communications & Data-Sharing—each with clear objectives, flagship projects, and performance measures to ensure our progress is transparent, data-driven, and measurable.

The work ahead is complex and demanding. Advancing violence prevention strategies, expanding rehabilitative and health services, modernizing operations, strengthening reentry supports, and protecting staff wellbeing will require dedication, adaptability, and strong partnerships across every facility and division. The new **Strategic Initiatives Division** will help coordinate these efforts, track results, and keep the Align Initiative connected to daily practice. Align is a living plan, flexible enough to respond to new challenges and opportunities, while firmly grounding us in our mission and values.

I am grateful to everyone who contributed to its development, and I have full confidence that our dedicated workforce will turn Align into tangible and impactful progress across the Commonwealth. Together, we will deliver safer facilities, healthier communities, and a stronger future for Massachusetts.

Sincerely,
Shawn P. Jenkins
Commissioner

VISION

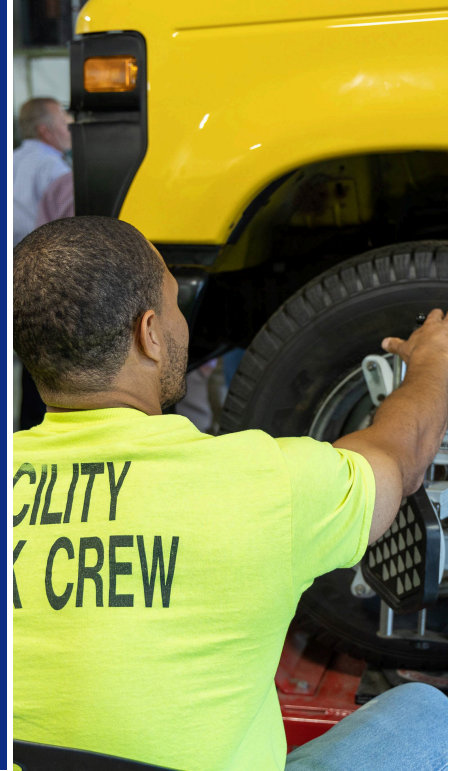
To be leaders in strengthening environments that contribute to safer and healthier communities.

MISSION

Promoting growth, success, and resiliency through a team of correctional professionals who foster a safe, empathic, results-driven environment.

VALUES

Responsible, Respectful,
Honest, Caring



About Align

The Align Initiative was shaped by those who know the work of corrections best and by partners who see its impact every day. It is the start of a bold new approach for the DOC.

How Align Was Built

Throughout 2025, the Massachusetts Department of Correction worked with independent industry experts to carry out a comprehensive assessment of our system. This work included:

- **Listening:** Visioning sessions, focus groups, and interviews were held with over 100 stakeholders — staff, unions, community partners, legislators, incarcerated individuals, advocacy organizations, and others.
- **Assessing:** Using SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) and PEST (Political, Economic, Social, Technological) analyses, we assessed both internal and external factors that shape our system, and can impact our work over the next five years. These analyses help us understand the forces, both local and national, that shape corrections.
- **Defining:** Six core priorities became clear—Workforce Investment, Safety, Excellence in Health & Wellbeing, Excellence in Operations, Enhance Reentry Assets, and Communication & Data Sharing — each having specific goals and objectives that will aid us in how we invest our time and resources.

Putting the Plan Into Action

Align is a living plan that provides structure with flexibility. It is more than a roadmap, this plan is a commitment to a focused vision for the future that reflects our great work, promotes collaboration, and creates mutual trust between stakeholders.

Strategic Initiatives Division

One of our first steps was the creation of a centralized division to manage the development and workflow of the department's plan and approach. This division will ensure continual momentum and track progress on the plan's goals.

Strategic Planning Oversight Committee

A group of senior leaders representing a variety of disciplines and areas of expertise will meet regularly to review our changing needs, adjust strategies, and address barriers.

Innovative Decision Making

Empowering staff to identify gaps and create solutions is critical to the success of this work. Their ideas will be reviewed through a strategic lens, and decisions will be made in consideration of the goals of Align. A continuous feedback loop will keep staff informed of decisions and plans.



Six Core Priorities

Align is organized around six core priorities that will guide our work over the next five years



Workforce Investment

Emphasizes building a sustainable workforce by strengthening skills, promoting innovation, and supporting health and wellness by building a positive culture that empowers staff to thrive.

Safety

Focuses on preventing violence, fostering psychological security, crisis preparedness, incorporating dynamic security practices, and improving resource optimization to protect both staff and incarcerated individuals.



Excellence in Health & Wellbeing

Provide positive treatment experiences, and the highest quality medical and behavioral health services to support optimal outcomes, while addressing the needs of the population through a Risk-Need-Responsivity approach.



Excellence in Operations

Improve workplace efficiency while expanding therapeutic activities for the incarcerated with a focus on high-quality food services, health-focused commissary options, and gender responsive management.

Enhance Reentry Assets

Continue to help establish economic stability, family bonds, and educational goals for the incarcerated by leveraging community partnerships to support successful reentry.



Communication & Data Sharing

Commitment to building trust through transparency, leveraging data for greater impact, and strengthening stakeholder relationships to create open, informed, and collaborative connections.

Workforce Investment

Recruiting, developing, and supporting a skilled, healthy, and motivated correctional workforce

Why It Matters

The people who work in our facilities are the foundation of every safety, health, and rehabilitation outcome we hope to achieve. When staff are supported, well-trained, and able to build sustainable careers, they are better equipped to manage complex situations, build constructive relationships, and model the professionalism our communities expect.

What We're Focusing On

- Making MADOC a place where people want to stay and grow their careers.
- Improving recruitment strategies to bring qualified candidates to the Department.
- Expanding professional development and leadership training opportunities for all staff.
- Building a workplace culture of connection and innovation.
- Reducing reliance on forced overtime and improving staffing stability.
- Supporting staff wellness, resilience, and mental health.
- Recognizing and celebrating exceptional work and everyday excellence.

Project Spotlight

The DOC is **investing in recruitment strategies** to build a larger, more diverse applicant pool and workforce. Through building a dedicated recruitment team, improving hiring practices, and expanding outreach to potential applicants, we aim to **increase the number of qualified candidates**, encouraging and supporting them in building long-term careers in corrections.



Commitments & Performance Indicators

Commitment	Description	Performance Indicators
Staff Wellness & Longevity	Seek to understand what helps staff stay, thrive, and retire healthy	Staff retention, wellness metrics, number of staff interested in leadership positions
Recognition & Culture	Create a workplace that regularly displays how it values and celebrates the contributors of all	Number of staff acknowledgments, participation in wellness and recognition events, feedback about employee sense of appreciation
Responsive to Staff Insight	Provides the power of change to all staff, where they can develop ideas into action	Number of staff engaged in action planning teams, number of proposals submitted from staff and from diverse positions

Safety

Reducing violence, promoting psychological safety, and strengthening crisis preparedness

Why It Matters

Safety is the fundamental principle behind everything we do. When facilities are safe, staff can focus on their work, incarcerated individuals can participate in programs and activities that support change, and communities can trust that people are returning home better prepared to succeed. Safety is not only about responding to incidents; it is about preventing harm, supporting wellbeing, and learning from every critical event.

What We're Focusing On

- Strengthening efforts to prevent violence by understanding patterns and risk factors while adhering to foundational security measures and de-escalation skills.
- Supporting psychological safety for both staff and incarcerated individuals.
- Bringing dynamic security principles into everyday practices and procedures.
- Enhancing infrastructure to support the Department's mission while creating healthier, more supportive spaces for staff and the incarcerated.
- Strengthening crisis preparedness through clear protocols, training, and after-action reviews.

Project Spotlight

DOC will launch a **Violence Surveillance Program** to coordinate data-driven, public-health-oriented **violence reduction strategies** across facilities, drawing on incident trends, risk factors, and multidisciplinary input.



Commitments & Performance Indicators

Commitment	Description	Performance Indicators
Focused Investment on Maximum Security Operations & Needs	There will be a focus on thoughtful approaches to staffing, support, and emerging response at SBCC in consideration of staff wellbeing and the complexities of the facility's population	Emergency response protocols, number of programs available to incarcerated individuals, utilization of housing units and congregate spaces throughout the facility
Address Substance Use & Introduction in our Facilities	Collaborating with partners to decrease the opportunity for illicit substance introduction into all our facilities and investing in enhanced investigative strategies	Number of tools available to identify illicit substances, number of programs that target substance use, reduction in number of introductions into the system
Violence Prevention Strategies	Build a consistent, statewide system to assess, recognize, and respond appropriately to the early warning signs of violence	Standardize definitions & reporting, implement ways to prioritize risk, implement more dynamic security principles, reduction of serious assaults and other violent measures over time

Excellence in Health & Wellbeing

Delivering high-quality, patient-centered care and evidence-based rehabilitative services

Why It Matters

Many people in DOC custody live with complex medical, mental health, and substance use needs. Providing timely, high-quality care is essential to safety, human dignity, and long-term public health. When individuals' medical and behavioral health needs are addressed, they are better able to participate in rehabilitative activities, manage daily stressors, and succeed in day-to-day regimen upon release.

What We're Focusing On

- Ensuring access to timely, patient-centered medical, mental health, and dental care.
- Improving the experience of care for individuals who need acute or ongoing services.
- Strengthening multidisciplinary collaboration around high-risk and complex cases.
- Adhering to the principles of the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model through classification practices and expanding access to evidence-based programs.

Project Spotlight

The DOC is adding to its continuum of mental health services by launching a **Wellness Helpline** for incarcerated individuals which provides **direct access** to qualified health professionals when concerns arise during off hours.

Implementation will occur one facility at a time to ensure functionality, continuous quality improvements, and accessibility to the entire the population.



Commitments & Performance Indicators

Commitment	Description	Performance Indicators
Focus on Complex Care	There will be various projects aimed at meeting specialized needs of the population and providing appropriate resources for mental illness, co-occurring disorders, and age-related conditions	Number of disciplines involved in complex/high risk cases, number of trainings available for staff, number of services received, number of accessible areas within the agency
Highest Quality Patient Centered Health Care Delivery	Enhance suicide prevention and risk identification, provide timely services for preventive health, provide safe and confidential settings, and ensure highly individualized discharge planning	Time from request to access mental health services, number of instances of self-harm, number of emergent hospital trips, participation in preventive health opportunities
Expansion of Evidence-Based Program Participation	Provide alternative access for program participation (tablet, hybrid) to reach more individuals, expand opportunities and type of recidivism reduction programs	Number of criminogenic needs addressed by available programming, participation rates and completions, number of programs available at each facility

Excellence in Operations

Improving quality of life through implementation of best practices and leveraging specialized resources throughout the Department

Why It Matters

Operational practices shape staff's work and incarcerated individuals' daily experience. When operations are efficient, fair, and consistent, they support safety, dignity, and reinforce the Department's mission. Having access to modern operational infrastructure also makes it easier to implement new initiatives and use resources wisely.

What We're Focusing On

- Keeping statewide policies aligned with facility-level practice, ensuring more inclusion of impacted professionals during policy revisions.
- Evaluating current processes for continuous quality improvement.
- Expanding opportunities for engaging and therapeutic recreational activities.
- Enhancing women-centered management practices, focusing on opportunities for family connections.
- Modernizing food services and commissary options to support health and culture.

Project Spotlight

To Upgrade our current case management system, the Department invested in a **modern cloud-based application** to increase efficiency from a user interface perspective and improve data integrity.



Commitments & Performance Indicators

Commitment	Description	Performance Indicators
Investment in Modern Technology Infrastructure	Focused on modernization, the Department is pursuing projects and tools that replace outdated systems with modern technologies and streamlined processes	Staff efficiency and productivity, access to relevant data and information
Modernize Services and Responsive Practices	Improve food service equipment, menus, and canteen options; expand opportunities for meaningful structured recreation; strengthen gender-responsive practices	Number of locally sourced and diverse products; participation in recreation activities; number of opportunities for input regarding reinvestment projects
Collaborative Approaches to Creation & Implementation of Policies	Identify areas of opportunity, incorporate more dynamic security principles, create a more inclusive process for policy revision, and adjust current practices to support sustainable change	Number of policies revised by workgroups, staff perception of their work, incarcerated perception of daily life, and working relationship between staff, management, and incarcerated

Enhance Reentry Assets

Building the skills, supports, and connections people need to succeed after release

Why It Matters

Most of the individuals in DOC custody will return to the community. Their ability to find safe and stable housing, secure meaningful employment, continue effective treatment, and reconnect with family support has a direct impact on public safety and community wellbeing. Strengthening reentry assets equips individuals leaving DOC custody with the tools to build stable and productive futures.

What We're Focusing On

- Supporting individuals' pursuits of purpose and community.
- Strengthening opportunities for family relationships and communication.
- Expanding education, digital skills, and vocational credentials.
- Promoting the economic security of individuals leaving custody.
- Expanding partnerships with community organizations and employers.

Project Spotlight

DOC continues to partner with colleges and universities to provide increased access to individuals and diversify the opportunities for post-secondary education. Most recently, the DOC expanded the **Boston College Prison Education Program** to work with those at **MCI Framingham**.



Commitments & Performance Indicators

Commitment	Description	Performance Indicators
Expand Career Technical Programs & Educational Opportunities	Expand Living Learning Communities, digital literacy programs, post-secondary education opportunities, and vocation credentials, including tablet-based learning	Completions in education and certification programs, number of credentials earned, and number of educational services across facilities
Access to Necessary Documentation & Stable Housing	Ensure more individuals leave custody with identification, build additional networks and opportunities for stable and safe housing post release	Identification documents available prior to release, agency partnerships with external organizations, collaboration with long-term/medical facilities, availability of housing options for release
Diversify & Increase Work Opportunities	Increase meaningful work experiences and preparedness while in DOC custody and strengthen connections to employment training for release	Population eligible for industries work; opportunities for remote work; participation in job-readiness initiatives; opportunities for employers and incarcerated to connect

Communication & Data Sharing

Building trust through clear communication, stakeholder engagement, and modern data systems

Why It Matters

Staff, incarcerated individuals, families, survivors, advocates, legislators, and the public all have a stake in how the system functions. Clear, transparent communication and responsible data-sharing help build trust, support collaboration, and show how the Department is making progress or where more work is needed.

What We're Focusing On

- Keeping staff informed by creating more opportunities for open dialogue between all staff and leadership.
- Strengthening relationships with key stakeholders, including survivors, advocates, and legislators.
- Improving how we manage, integrate, and share data.
- Effectively communicating the exemplary work and outcomes produced by staff.
- Identify areas of mutual interest between the Department and stakeholders to accomplish shared goals.

Project Spotlight

Commissioner-led town hall meetings regularly scheduled **with staff at each facility** and within divisions, with sessions offered across shifts. These forums will provide accessible, two-way communication where leadership can share updates, hear concerns, and identify new ideas and mutual interests.



Commitments & Performance Indicators

Commitment	Description	Performance Indicators
Encourage and Support Strategic Thinking	Establish a division and Oversight Committee to coordinate the work of Align, integrate ideas from the field, track results, and compile reports on progress	Number of projects connected to Align, utilization of action planning teams, availability and accuracy of regular reports on progress
Internal Communication & Town Halls	Continue Commissioner-led town halls, expand communication opportunities with other executive and facility leadership, and increase feedback channels for staff and incarcerated	Number of town halls held, type, number of participants, and quality of participation; staff awareness of Align, and survey of staff feeling informed
Legislative & Public Engagement	Increase the variety and availability of public dashboards that share information on the Department's work, and proactively reach out and connect with the legislature	Number of public-facing dashboards, notices, and communication opportunities, utilization of public engagement options

Thank You

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Thank you on behalf of the entire agency for your dedication, assistance, and commitment to the Department's work as we embark on this new endeavor.

With gratitude,
Shawn P. Jenkins
Commissioner

