



ALIGN INITIATIVE

Strategic Plan: Our Framework

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

Massachusetts Department of Correction
Strategic Plan 2026-2031



MODERN APPROACH

As we remain committed to the advancement of corrections, stakeholder feedback compelled the Department to rethink the purpose of and strategies driving our work. As a result, a written strategic plan and distinctive strategic planning process was developed to ensure a clear alignment in our vision, mission, and daily work.

This journey began with listening to the valuable feedback of stakeholders who have a vested interest in the agency's work. Over one hundred internal and external stakeholders accepted our invitation to contribute their thoughts and opinions, answering open-ended questions such as: "What is the DOC's purpose?" and "Where can the DOC improve?". This collaborative and engaging approach is the foundation of our strategic planning process. Aimed at strengthening trust in the Department's decision-making, we developed a dynamic plan steeped in the ideas, hopes, and prioritizations of our plan contributors.

Typical action plans with sequential steps are too rigid for our work; it assumes the steps needed to achieve our goals today will be the same five years from now. Recognizing that corrections is a rapidly changing environment, we designed a planning and implementation process that was fit for modern corrections. This was accomplished through developing an agile plan that will respond to challenges, leverage expertise from all levels of staff, and be championed by those who participated in its creation. This approach provides the power of change to all staff, not just agency leaders, while creating a new generation of strategic professionals to fulfill the agency's mission. Accomplishing this ambitious plan will create a department that is stronger and sincere in our mission of promoting growth, success, and resiliency.

During the next five years, agency leadership will work with correctional leaders and professionals to craft specific action plans to achieve our goals and objectives. Regular updates on progress will be provided, furthering the priority of visibility and alignment through our work.

OUR COMMITMENT

The Align Initiative is the start of a **bold new approach** for the Department of Correction. This initiative seeks to foster safer facilities, stronger operations and improved outcomes. It will act as a **guide for the Department** to ensure new and continued projects serve the overall mission in a deliberate way. The focus for this transition will not just be a shift in process, but in mindset as well. By closing the internal gaps, and **aligning our priorities**, we will build a more unified and responsive system that leads from within by those who know the work best.

OUR CORE PRIORITIES

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



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.

A. Cultivate an environment where professionals aspire to establish a long-term career within the Department.

- A.1. Enact effective recruiting strategies to attract a wide network of qualified candidates.
- A.2. Reduce the time period from interview to job offer to new employee orientation.
- A.3. Continuously evaluate staffing allocation and deployment practices to maximize staffing resources.

B. Enhance competency-building frameworks that develop the technical and leadership skills of correctional professionals.

- B.1. Build a foundation of knowledge, skills, and abilities that equip new correctional professionals for immediate success on the job.
- B.2. Ensure ongoing and specialized training curriculum that reflects contemporary correctional practices.
- B.3. Equip high-performing professionals with the necessary training and opportunities to develop into future correctional leaders.
- B.4. Formalize professional mentoring practices to provide guidance and support to professionals fulfilling new leadership roles within the Department.
- B.5. Enhance experiential learning and interdisciplinary knowledge through internal site visits and cross-training opportunities.

C. Develop a positive workplace culture of connection and innovation.

- C.1. Leadership and supervisors at all levels will offer support, collaboration, empowerment, and guidance to those they manage.
- C.2. Meaningfully and frequently recognize the exemplary contributions of correctional professionals through regularly scheduled recognition activities and on-the-ground reinforcement of positive practices.
- C.3. Encourage utilization of educational opportunities available to correctional professionals.
- C.4. Responsibly leverage resources and technology to create workplace efficiency and boost workplace connectivity.
- C.5. Enhance accountability for those who deviate from the Department's vision, mission, core values, and professional standards.

D. Foster the highest levels of health and wellness possible for correctional professionals.

- D.1. Solicit employee feedback to identify facility-specific health and wellness priorities.
- D.2. Increase awareness regarding the multidimensional nature of healthy living and wellbeing.
- D.3. Proactively address occupational stressors that negatively impact correctional professionals through consistent offerings of supportive and wellness-focused initiatives.



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.

A. Develop advanced strategies to prevent violence within facilities.

- A.1. Ensure regular application of foundational security measures.
- A.2. Apply a public health approach to violence prevention strategies.
- A.3. Demonstrate mastery and consistent use of de-escalation skills and techniques.
- A.4. Increase consistency in the incorporation of key aspects of dynamic security into daily operations.
- A.5. Enhance the capability of intelligence-gathering services and technology to proactively identify threats to safety and security.

B. Develop a psychologically safe environment for those who live and work inside the facilities.

- B.1. Demonstrate higher levels of knowledge and application of trauma-informed principles and practices.
- B.2. Better appreciate the diverse cultural experiences and backgrounds of individuals who live and work inside of the Department.

C. Optimize resource allocation for facility infrastructure improvements to ensure physical plants align with the Department's mission.

- C.1. Employ facility-specific strategies to address climate challenges associated with extreme weather patterns that is intensified by aging infrastructure, and informed by routine assessments and proactive planning.
- C.2. Maximize functionality of existing spaces for recreation and programming.
- C.3. Support positive impressions through facility cleanliness and beautification efforts.
- C.4. Ensure the adequacy of treatment and programming areas.
- C.5. Routinely study the need for new construction and facility improvement projects.
- C.6. Leverage data, outcomes, and correctional best practices to effectively communicate infrastructure development and investment needs to decision-makers and stakeholders.

D. Enhance crisis preparedness for effective prevention of, response to, and recovery from operational and health-related emergencies.

- D.1. Ensure alignment of emergency response protocols to evolving standards of care.
- D.2. Optimize the emergency response system, including the menu of options, protocols, command structures, communication plans, and deployment criteria.
- D.3. Enhance scenario-based drills and training.
- D.4. Implement new technologies and ensure ongoing maintenance of emergency response equipment.
- D.5. Encourage safe and timely restoration of normal operations post crisis.



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.

A. Promote the highest quality, patient-centered, efficient health care delivery system.

- A.1. Minimize and manage symptoms of chronic medical and mental health conditions.
- A.2. Support the clinical independence of treatment and rehabilitative care providers.
- A.3. Responsively address basic oral health needs.
- A.4. Provide timely access to ancillary and specialty health services.
- A.5. Provide timely forensic psychological and psychiatric assessments.
- A.6. Support the emotional and physical well-being of individuals through effective suicide risk identification and intervention.

B. Create a positive experience for individuals requiring acute or non-acute health and behavioral health care intervention.

- B.1. Ensure sufficient quantity and quality of safe and confidential settings.
- B.2. Provide highly individualized discharge planning services.
- B.3. Ensure an effective and clinically appropriate formulary that addresses complex and chronic conditions.

C. Strengthen multidisciplinary collaboration for optimal outcomes.

- C.1. Emphasize mutual obligations and a unified approach in multidisciplinary training.
- C.2. Leverage technology to simplify project status updates, documentation, and real-time communication to keep team members aligned.
- C.3. Actively seek multidisciplinary input in high-risk, complex case decision-making.
- C.4. Increase co-creation of goals and patient participation in multidisciplinary meetings.

D. Skillfully implement the core principles of the Risk-Need-Responsivity model.

- D.1. Maintain a modern, revalidated classification system.
- D.2. Expand the implementation of evidenced-based, risk assessment tools.
- D.3. Reduce long term classifications to maximum security through enhancing access to programs, providing individualized case management, and encouraging positive adjustment.
- D.4. Increase access to programming across all security levels.
- D.5. Proficiently respond to the needs of specialized populations.
- D.6. Enhance efforts to increase access to and utilization of harm reduction and substance misuse treatments.
- D.7. Increase competency in addressing the underlying causes of disciplinary infractions.
- D.8. Continuously monitor program delivery outcomes and develop performance improvement plans as appropriate.
- D.9. Strengthen the collaborative nature of vendor partnerships.
- D.10. Expand the use of tablet-based programming.



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.

A. Ensure successful implementation of best practices or innovative changes to operations.

- A.1. Ensure continuous alignment of policy and practice at the statewide and facility level.
- A.2. Exercise an approach more inclusive of impacted professionals in policy revision.
- A.3. Leverage specialized resources to stay current with evolving correctional standards and best practices.
- A.4. Broaden the understanding of the correctional field across all levels of staff through attendance at regional/national conferences.

B. Expand the provision of engaging and therapeutic recreational activities.

- B.1. Provide a variety of congregate recreational options that align with the interests of a diverse incarcerated population.
- B.2. Increase the utilization of the Scheduled-Offered-Accepted-Received (SOAR) model across all unit types to track movement to and from recreational and programming opportunities.

C. Enhance application of women-centered management practices.

- C.1. Establish an intensive, individualized, gender-responsive case management model.
- C.2. Increase effective engagement and rapport building techniques when communicating with incarcerated women to establish more collaborative and empathetic working alliances.
- C.3. Enhance opportunities for children, specifically infants, and incarcerated mothers to effectively bond.

D. Promote the highest quality and efficiency for food services.

- D.1. Increase the use of locally sourced food and products.
- D.2. Invest in the modernization of food service equipment and technology.
- D.3. Enhance connection and cultural celebration through meals.

E. Emphasize convenience and health in commissary transactions.

- E.1. Offer a variety of goods and supplies that align with the diverse interests and tastes of the population.
- E.2. Increase the ability for family and friends to participate in the commissary process.



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.

A. Support individuals' pursuits of purpose and community.

- A.1. Increase the modalities around spiritual/religious services.
- A.2. Increase recognition of incarcerated individuals' prosocial activities and educational/vocational accomplishments achieved during incarceration.

B. Support strong family connections.

- B.1. Ensure a welcoming and normalized visitation experience.
- B.2. Expand the use of technology to increase opportunities for communication and family engagement.

C. Promote the economic security of individuals leaving DOC custody.

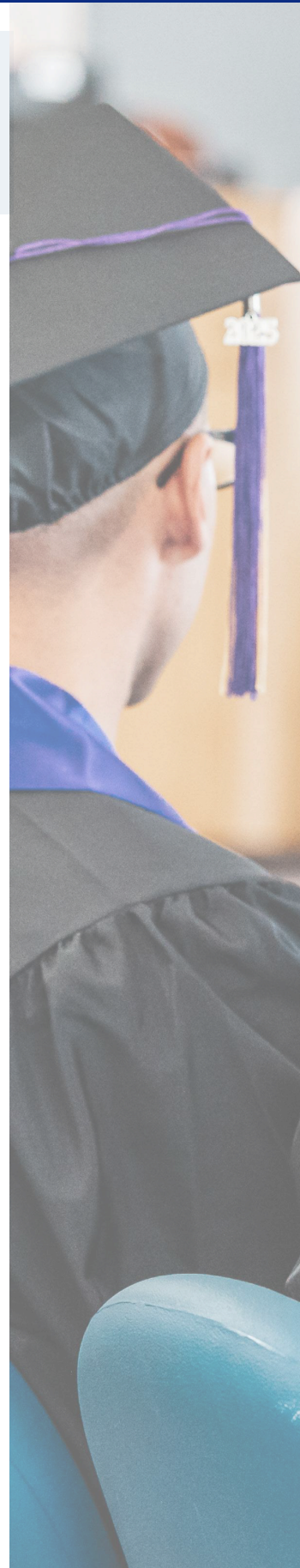
- C.1. Increase the post-release stable and safe housing network and opportunities.
- C.2. Expand industry training that helps individuals secure quality post-release employment.
- C.3. Establish strong pre-release and post-release employment networks.
- C.4. Ensure individuals release with completed identification and eligible benefit documentation.

D. Increase the number of certificates, diplomas, and degrees earned by the incarcerated population.

- D.1. Enhance existing and develop new educational partnerships to increase educational offerings to the incarcerated population.
- D.2. Ensure digital education tools are available to the entire incarcerated population.
- D.3. Ensure the adequacy of educational classrooms.

E. Maximize the benefit of community partnerships.

- E.1. Ensure a safe and efficient stakeholder/community partner visitation process.
- E.2. Equip community partners/volunteers with training and supervision that supports successful program facilitation in the correctional environment.
- E.3. Ensure program offerings and schedules align with the needs and interests of the incarcerated population.
- E.4. Routinely evaluate for service duplication and gaps.



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.

A. Cultivate higher levels of trust through providing more information on the Department's decision-making processes and initiatives.

- A.1. Enhance the internal communication plan to more consistently and effectively keep employees informed on the agency's goals, initiatives, and outcomes.
- A.2. Expand opportunities for meaningful reciprocal dialogue between leadership, frontline professionals, and incarcerated individuals.
- A.3. Establish a strategic press release calendar.
- A.4. Establish a system wide strategic planning team for the oversight of related projects and proposals, collection of key performance indicators, updating and reporting on Goal and Objective achievements, and realigning key priorities with present circumstances/obstacles.

B. Maximize the value of available data.

- B.1. Expand effective data management strategies, data consistency, data integration, and modern data technologies.
- B.2. Launch new data dashboards on the Department's website.
- B.3. Continuously ensure accuracy and relevancy of website information.

C. Actively strengthen relationships with stakeholders.

- C.1. Increase the number of progress-focused collaborations and communications with victims of crime and organizations external to the Department.
- C.2. Diversify the strategies used to solicit feedback from key stakeholders in consensus-building efforts.
- C.3. Increase the identification of areas of mutual interest and goals between the Department and stakeholders, such as legislative groups.
- C.4. Proactively and publicly communicate the exemplary work and outcomes of the Department.
- C.5. Regularly inform stakeholders of new initiatives and progress on ongoing projects.



Thank You

Our Contributors

Kayoon Addison,
Nelson Alves,
Kevin Anahory,
Laurie Anderson,
Allison Andrade,
Alicia Anzivino,
Brianna Arruda,
Timothy Askew,
Bernard Audette,
James Ballin,
Hilary Binda,
Analisa Bono,
Thomas Borden,
Tracey Borrelli,
Jennifer Boyts,
Shawna Brechbill,
Thomas Brennan,
Chris Bulger,
Anthony Catalano,
Patrick Conway,
Scott Croteau,
Lisa Curto,
Meg Dailey,
Matthew Dailey,
Shondell Davis,
John Dean,
Frank DeLeo,

Matthew Divris,
Ryan Donlon,
Brooke Doyle,
Kevin Eklund,
Steven Falconer,
Jeff Fisher,
Sean Foley,
Natasha Frost,
Joy Gallant,
Mneesha Gellman,
Chris Gendreau,
Jennifer Gilardi,
Jeffrey Gonsalves,
Timothy Gotovich,
Dean Gray,
Heidi Handler,
Steven Hughes,
Shawn Jenkins,
Emi Joy Maffeo,
Kerry Keefe,
Mary Keefe,
Carrie Kelley,
Stephen Kennedy,
Marguerite
Lambert,
Jason Lanpher,
Kenneth Lizotte,

Ryan Luther,
Russell Luthman,
Joann Lynds,
Kristie Marchand,
Dennis Martin,
Mary Ellen
Mastrorilli,
Dana Mascari,
Hollie Matthews,
Matt Moniz,
Chloe Mitchell,
Lyn Muise,
Abbe Nelligan,
Chris Nichols,
James O'Gara,
Nia Oparaji,
Nikolas Orellana,
Kelly Paquin,
Avvani Patel,
Andrew Peck,
Kyle Pelletier,
Julia Perez,
Janice Perez,
Mitzi Peterson,
Tom Preston,
Jeffrey Quick,
Leslie Reed,

Amy Riordan,
Mike Rodrigues,
Jennifer Roedel,
Scott Rogers,
John Rose,
Sarah Ruiz,
Chrissy Ruuska,
Lindsay Sabadosa,
Rob Swartz,
Fatou Sidibe,
Kate Silvia,
Thomas Simeone,
Scott Smith,
Karen Swank,
Susan Terrey,
Erika Uytterhoeven,
Cheryl Van Scyoc,
Denise Vega,
Kerry Wagner,
Erin Walsh,
Norma Wassel,
Fatima Watt,
Brianna Whelan,
Nancy White,
Christopher
Worrell, Eva
Yutkins-Kennedy

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Shawn P. Jenkins
Commissioner

