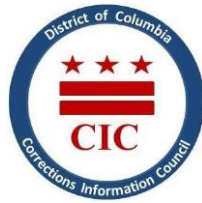


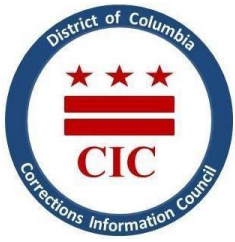
District of Columbia
Corrections Information Council



Volunteers of America Chesapeake, Inc.
Report on Findings and Recommendations



September 11, 2023



District of Columbia Corrections Information Council

Charles Thornton, Board Chair
Katharine A. Huffman, Board Member
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About the District of Columbia Corrections Information Council

The District of Columbia Corrections Information Council (CIC) is an independent oversight body mandated by the United States Congress and the Council of the District of Columbia to inspect, monitor, and report on the conditions of confinement in correctional facilities where residents from the District of Columbia are incarcerated. This includes facilities operated by the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), the District of Columbia Department of Corrections (DOC), and private contractors.

The CIC reports its observations and recommendations to the District of Columbia Representative in the United States Congress, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, the Council of the District of Columbia, the District of Columbia Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice, the Director of the BOP, the Director of the DOC, and the community.

Although the CIC does not handle individual complaints or provide legal representation or advice, individuals are still encouraged to contact the CIC. Reports, concerns, and general information from incarcerated D.C. residents and the public are very important to the CIC, and they greatly inform our inspection schedule, recommendations, and reports. However, unless expressly permitted by the individuals or required by law, names and identifying information of residents, corrections staff not in leadership, and members of the general public are kept anonymous and confidential.

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Facility Overview

Facility Profile

Dates of Inspection: June 5, 2023

Location: Baltimore, MD

Distance from DC: 60 miles

Security Level: Minimum

Year of Opening: 1993

Rated Capacity: 148

Population total: 120

DC Population: 65

Population of DC Men Interviewed: 8

Introduction

Volunteers of America Chesapeake, Inc. (VOA) is a residential reentry center (RRC) located in Baltimore Maryland, which is 60 miles from Washington, DC. VOA houses men transitioning from prison to community life. The facility has a capacity of 148, and currently houses 120 individuals, with 65 DC Code offenders. DC Code offenders are not in the VOA contract, but VOA provides housing since there is currently no RRC located in DC.

CIC staff toured the facility and interviewed eight men living there. The inspection was completed with a close-out meeting with VOA and BOP staff. The facility was clean, quiet, and well maintained. Residents had 25 feet of unencumbered space around each bed per Bureau of Prisons (BOP) policy.

The CIC inspection was predicated on reports from residents that VOA did not have enough beds and were having people sleep on the floor. The issue was resolved by the time of the inspection. VOA staff informed CIC staff that the facility was briefly overpopulated. VOA staff stated that after the passage of the First Step Act (FSA), the rate at which people are released from prison to RRCs increased. VOA is reportedly changing operations to handle the influx of people. To make sure there is space for residents coming out of prison, VOA staff reported they sent residents to home confinement and transferred residents to another RRC in Delaware.

Sometimes, residents on home confinement violate the terms of their home confinement. Normally, this would mean they are sent back to VOA, but because of the limited space and the increasing amount of people coming out of prison, home confinement violators are remanded to prison to allow space for others to transition into the community.

Key Findings

Residential Conditions

- VOA houses residents from DC, Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia.
- The computer room has five computers.
- There is one case manager per 45 residents and six case managers on staff. The normal ratio is 30 residents per case manager when VOA is fully staffed with ten case managers. Staff reported they were onboarding two new case managers.
- VOA staff stated they audit the case management files to ensure case managers see residents biweekly. Some residents stated they see their case manager less than biweekly.
- Residents slept in open rooms with multiple beds and lockers.
- Each living area has a bathroom with stalls and showers, including one handicapped shower.
- The size of the rooms and number of beds varied, but each resident had 25 continuous square feet of unencumbered space around each bed per BOP policy.¹
- Staff stated disabled residents receive more continuous unencumbered space in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Laundry machines are free to use.
- According to staff, the average length of stay used to be 120 days, but after the passage of the FSA - the average length of stay is 240 days. This is because more people are coming out of prison and VOA is understaffed, which slows down operations at VOA.

Medical and Mental Health

- Staff stated one doctor visits the facility once a month.
- One resident reported he was on the waitlist for the doctor for four months.
- The BOP contracts with outside medical providers for residents to utilize. Residents cannot seek their own medical provider.
- Royal Minds is a mental health facility down the street from VOA where residents go for drug treatment and counseling.

Home Confinement

- To transition to home confinement, a resident needs a cell phone, their home sponsor needs a cell phone, and the home sponsor cannot have a gun.

¹ Statement of Work, Residential Reentry Center, 28 (Mar. 2022) (Each resident in an RRC is entitled to 25 continuous square feet of unencumbered space. This means that there cannot be furniture or other obstructions in a 25 square foot area around the bed of each resident. This requirement dictates the number of residents the VOA can put in each room).

- VOA requires residents on home confinement to report back to VOA for drug screenings; however, their Statement of Work with the BOP allows for laboratory and on-site testing.²
- Staff reported that normally, violating home confinement would mean returning to VOA but because of the influx of people out of prison they are remanding those that violate home confinement back to prison.

Programs and Services

- DC residents are given a pamphlet with information on DC resources.
- For physical recreation, there is an indoor gym and basketball court. There are no outdoor recreation areas.
- Travel assistance is given to indigent residents. Case managers budget with the residents to determine if they can afford the transportation they need.

Movement

- Residents require leisure passes to leave the facility. Residents are eligible for leisure passes only if they are programming.
- Staff give two leisure passes at a time, and residents must request a pass 48 hours in advance.
- Residents must show proof they went where they were authorized by providing pictures or some sort of documentation.
- Residents reported they are allowed to go out for hygiene supplies once every two weeks. They cannot get hygiene products when they first arrive, so they must go at least the first week without hygiene products.
- Residents have ten hours from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM to leave VOA for programming and appointments.
- Residents stated that ten hours is not enough to travel to a job, complete an eight-hour shift, and travel back to VOA if the job is in DC. Staff stated residents can get a waiver to have more time to travel for work.

²Statement of Work Residential Reentry Center, *Urinalysis Procedure*, Attachment G (Mar. 2022) (“The drug and alcohol testing surveillance program can utilize laboratory-based testing for screening and confirmations OR on-site test cups for screening at the point of collection and laboratory-based confirmation testing for any screen positive at the point of collection.”)

Recommendations

Medical and Mental Health

- Provide drug treatment and counseling on site at VOA.

BOP Response: Volunteers of America (VOA) is not required under their contract to provide drug treatment and counseling services, nor is any residential reentry services provider nationwide. As a part of reentry, residents bear some responsibility for their recovery. VOA encourages the residents to enroll in formal or informal drug and alcohol treatment either through the BOP's drug and alcohol counseling services contract through Royal Minds or the use of local Alcohol and Narcotics Anonymous groups they partner with in the Baltimore area.

Home Confinement

- Allow DC residents to do drug screenings in DC laboratories without having to travel back to VOA.

BOP Response: VOA complies with the BOP's contract requirements as outlined in the 2017 Statement of Work (SOW). Therefore, based on the SOW, VOA is not permitted to allow DC residents to do drug screens in DC laboratories. The SOW requires VOA to establish a surveillance program to deter and detect the introduction of illegal drugs and alcohol. Home confinement residents are required to be tested for drug and alcohol use in the same manner and frequency as residents within the RRC. The SOW is very specific to who will be tested and how testing will be performed.

Movement

- VOA should allow residents to leave the facility for hygiene products within their first week of arrival or provide adequate supplies in the interim.

BOP Response: VOA allows residents to bring up to two weeks' worth of hygiene items into the facility or have a family member provide them with a box of hygiene or clothing, upon arrival. If the resident is indigent, VOA provides hygiene items at no cost to residents, as required by the SOW.

- Assure case managers inform DC residents of the appropriate procedures or waivers required to attend DC-based obligations without exceeding their allotted time.

BOP Response: VOA provides residents with transit information for both DC and Baltimore and ensures they have appropriate RRC staff contact information to report any issues. Resident passes are based on the residents' requested method of transportation. If the resident uses public transit, case managers attempt to align the passes with the public transit schedule. In situations of mass transit interruptions, VOA will contact the resident to provide additional guidance. The time allotted for DC resident passes are based on the DC-based obligation and account for travel time to and from the location.

- Establish regular communication protocols with MORCA to facilitate DC-based programming and re-entry support.

BOP Response: The BOP continues to ensure and supports VOA's willingness to work with DC reentry organizations which is evident through their current partnerships with nine DC organizations. MORCA is encouraged to contact the Director of VOA and/or the Vice President of Maryland Programs with any additional DC resources for DC residents to assist with ensuring a successful transition back to the District of Columbia.