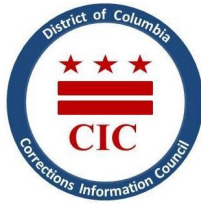


District of Columbia
Corrections Information Council

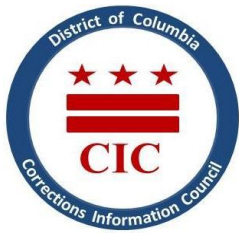


FCI Schuylkill

Report on Findings and Recommendations



September 5, 2025



District of Columbia Corrections Information Council

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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: April 23-24, 2025

Location: Minersville, Pennsylvania

Security Level: Medium

Rated Capacity: 1,340

Population: 1,207

D.C. Code Offenders: 109

D.C. Code Survey Respondents: 75

Introduction

Federal Correctional Institution Schuylkill (FCI Schuylkill) is a medium security facility, which includes a federal Satellite Prison Camp (SPC Schuylkill). FCI Schuylkill is located in Minersville, Pennsylvania. The facility is approximately 175 miles from Washington, DC.

Based on communications from residents and loved ones, the inspection focused on issues with continuous lockdowns, obstacles to educational and vocational programming, and verbal mistreatment of residents.

During the interview process, residents expressed concerns about the impact and frequency of lockdowns, highlighting how these disruptions hinder their ability to participate in programming and attend GED classes which are key opportunities for improving their chances of successful reintegration. According to BOP policy, “full-time teachers and education specialists must spend at least 75 percent of their 40-hour workweek in instruction or in work related to instruction, with a minimum of 50 percent of their work hours spent in direct classroom instruction.¹” Lockdowns inhibit this requirement. Multiple residents reported that staff at FCI Schuylkill occasionally used racist and unprofessional language when addressing them and displayed bias against DC residents. CIC staff relayed these accounts to FCI Schuylkill personnel.

Demographics

The DC Code Offender population at FCI Schuylkill consisted of 109 male residents. Thirty-four residents are between the ages of 25-34. Twenty-four residents identify as Muslim, and twenty-seven identify as Christian. Forty-six residents have received their high school diploma or GED, and one resident has a bachelor’s degree. Five residents received their GED while at FCI Schuylkill. Forty-two residents have been at FCI Schuylkill for less than one year. Four residents are currently in the SHU, and nineteen residents have been to the SHU at least one to three times at FCI Schuylkill. Forty-four residents reported being within 24 months of their release from FCI Schuylkill. Twenty residents work at UNICOR recycling electronics. Twenty-seven residents stated that they had communication with their Unit Team once every six months; additional survey responses ranged from never to once every three months.

¹ See BOP Program Statement 5300.021 at 11, https://www.bop.gov/policy/progstat/5300_021.pdf.

Key Findings

General

- The warden had been replaced by the associate warden (now acting warden) due to a physical altercation with another employee.
- FCI Schuylkill operates with insufficient staffing.
- Every DC Code offender who spoke with the CIC referenced the lockdowns' impact on programs. Residents stated they were confined to their units and cells for weeks and months.
- Executive staff reported that the SHU frequently reaches full capacity, necessitating modified operations and requiring residents to remain confined to their units and cells.
- DC Code offenders reported a desire for more reentry programming; they currently have access to written reentry materials.
- Due to lockdowns and short staffing, residents receive a cold breakfast alongside their dinner at 5:30 PM. Residents are required to save that breakfast to eat during the early morning hours.
- Several residents reported not receiving grievance forms after requesting them; several others reported not receiving a response to grievances after submission.

Resident Surveys

- Thirteen residents stated that they were participating in RDAP. Fifty-four residents indicated they were not participating in RDAP.
- Residents stated they were given Adult Continuing Education (ACE) packets with no direction, tutoring, or grading upon completion of the packet.
- Every interviewed resident stated that under the previous warden, when a resident faced the Disciplinary Housing Officer (DHO) for an infraction and was found guilty, the previous warden would extend their sanctions beyond what the DHO initially imposed.
- Residents reported receiving a hot lunch daily in the cafeteria. Residents must pick up their dinner, which is served hot but is reportedly cold by the time they return to their unit. At dinner, residents also receive a cold breakfast that they are expected to save and eat during the following morning due to staffing shortages.
- All residents reported being restricted to just two phone calls per day per FSA.²
- The most common issues were related to education, programs, and the disciplinary punishment process; however, fifty-six residents out of seventy-five have not utilized the grievance process.

² See Development of Risk and Needs Assessment System, 18 U.S.C. § 3632(d)(1)(A) <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title18-section3632&num=0&edition=prelim> (“phone privileges, or, if available, video conferencing privileges, for up to 30 minutes per day, and up to 510 minutes per month”).

Housing

- FCI Schuylkill consists of eight housing units with sixty cells per unit.
 - The general population housing unit that CIC inspected held 114 residents; the capacity is 120. There were thirteen DC residents housed in the unit.
 - The unit mainly houses residents on the waiting list to participate in RDAP.
 - There were eight showers in the unit.
 - The unit had five phones.
- There were six Trust Fund Limited Inmate Computer System (TRULINCS) stations in the Unit. TRULINCS enables electronic messages to be exchanged between residents and the public in a secure manner.

Residential Drug Abuse Program Unit (RDAP)

- The RDAP unit currently houses 96 residents in two-man cells, which includes twenty-three DC Code offenders. There are five phones and four TRULICS computers.
- There are currently eight DC Code offenders awaiting placement in RDAP.
- There are three phases to the drug treatment program. Five hundred hours of programming are required to complete the program.
- Three journals are completed by residents in each phase.
- The program lasts 9-12 months and each resident participates in programming for three hours daily, consisting of community meetings, journal writing, and support groups.
- Five hundred hours of programming are required to complete the program.
- Participants in the program are eligible to receive both a sentence reduction of up to twelve months and FSA credits for those who qualify; DC Code offenders are currently awaiting BOP issuance of FSA time credits since they are not federal offenders.³
- Residents still program in RDAP during a facility lockdown or modified operations.

Resident Surveys

- Residents in the general population unit stated that they were constantly on lockdown.
- Residents stated the importance of participating in RDAP to aid in their release preparation.
- Multiple residents stated that the showers were “infested” with insects.

³ See Imprisonment of a Convicted Person, 18 U.S.C. § 3621(e)(2)(B), <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid%3AUSC-2000-title18-section3621&num=0&edition=2000> (“The period a prisoner convicted of a nonviolent offense remains in custody after successfully completing a treatment program may be reduced by the Bureau of Prisons, but such reduction may not be more than one year from the term the prisoner must otherwise serve”). See also Development of Risk and Needs Assessment System, 18 U.S.C. 3632(d)(6), <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title18-section3632&num=0&edition=prelim> (“The incentives described in this subsection shall be in addition to any other rewards or incentives for which a prisoner may be eligible”).

Special Housing Unit (SHU)

- CIC staff were unable to physically inspect the SHU, but staff interviewed five SHU residents.
- A staff psychologist visits the SHU weekly to meet with SHU Residents.
- Medical staff visit the SHU daily. Sick calls are administered to SHU residents during these daily visits.
- Nurses are required to provide medication daily.
- The Chaplain is required to visit the SHU weekly to talk to the residents and administer services.
- Residents are given one hour of recreation daily.
- Residents are prohibited from participating in programs (excluding GED) when they receive infractions.
- Residents have access to the law library daily as needed.

Resident Surveys

- One resident in the SHU reported that he did not have access to the law library, nor medical or psychology services.
- Two residents stated that they did not have access to medical services.
- Three residents informed CIC that they did not have access to psychology services.
- One resident had six months left before his release date and reported that his unit team had not been helpful with his release preparation including his halfway house designation.

Medical

- FCI Schuylkill is a Care Level 2 facility.⁴
- Health services are administered by an outside contractor: HCA Global.
- The medical unit reported four vacancies for one nurse and additional support staff
- Medical staff stated that sick call requests by residents are triaged immediately. Further appointments are assessed based on urgency of the issues.
- More than 2000 prescriptions are filled in a month at the facility.
- Telehealth is conducted twice a week.
- Medical staff offers a Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) program aimed at supporting residents with opioid use disorder (OUD).
- All staff at FCI Schuylkill receive training in administering Narcan to residents.
- Lehigh Valley Hospital is within a 20-mile radius of the facility. Residents must get approval through consultation to go to the outside hospital, unless it is an emergency.

⁴ See BOP Program Statement 6031.05 § 3, p. 9. <https://www.bop.gov/policy/progstat/6031.05.pdf>. (“Care Level 2 institutions house inmates that have stable chronic conditions managed by Health Services employees . . . Care Level 2 inmates generally self-manage their conditions and need infrequent visits to medical specialists or community facilities.”)

Dental

- Residents are automatically placed on a waitlist, which is currently two and a half years.
- A dentist visits FCI Schuylkill once a month for a week-long period.
- The average appointment is typically one hour.

Eyecare

- Optometry services are conducted by contractors monthly for residents in need.

Mental Health Services

- The Chief Psychologist oversees three staff psychologists.
- Residents receive intake screenings with follow ups.
- Residents with advanced care levels are given monthly appointments to address their issues.
- FCI Schuylkill employs a special population program coordinator that oversees four special populations: veterans, the disabled, residents over 50, and residents involved in the parenting process.
- Other programs administered through the psychology department include anger management, criminal thinking, and trauma management.

Resident Surveys

- Forty-five survey respondents stated the medical department does not respond to sick call within 48 hours.
- Forty-nine survey respondents stated they were unsatisfied with medical services at FCI Schuylkill.
- Thirty-four survey respondents informed CIC staff that they had been diagnosed with a mental health issue.
- Thirty-two survey respondents stated they were not receiving their mental health medication.
- Seventeen survey respondents stated they knew how to request mental health services.
- One resident expressed concerns that his medical needs require a daily colostomy bag change, but he does not receive enough supplies. Additionally, the facility would not permit needed surgery, since he is expected to return home within the year.

Education & Programming

- The education department is fully staffed with seven teachers, including a special education specialist.
- Forty-four DC Residents are enrolled in the GED program. Forty DC Code offenders are on the waitlist to enroll in the GED program.
- The Education Department allows residents to receive certifications in Restaurant Management and Safe Serve (food handler).
- Residents at the facility earned over 450 certifications last year.
- Post Secondary education classes are administered by Ohio University, Colorado State University, and Adams College.
- Eight law library computers are provided in the educational department.

- FCI Schuylkill offers specialized education programs for students who require additional support. Three DC Code offenders attend special education classes.
- DC Code offenders reported a desire for more reentry programming; they currently have access to the Reentry Navigator and the CSOSA Resource book, which are written reentry materials designed to provide transitional resources.

Recreation

- The recreation department is fully staffed.
- Ceramics, crochet, and drawing classes are offered through the recreation department. Classes hover around 20-25 residents and last 4-6 weeks.
- FCI Schuylkill features an indoor gymnasium where residents can participate in intramural sports, including basketball leagues held in both winter and summer.
- Residents lead exercise classes in yoga, jump rope, core training, and functional training, providing opportunities for fitness and wellness within the facility.
- A fully equipped weightlifting area is located outside the upper level of the recreation space. Residents have access to a range of weights for strength training.
- One music room with equipment is located in the recreation department.⁵
- The recreation department, led by staff, offers activities that are eligible for FSA credits for qualifying individuals

Religious Services

- FCI Schuylkill employs one chaplain.
- Religious groups consist of ten different faiths. Residents can worship in the same spaces.
- The Orthodox Islam community is the largest religious group in the facility.
- There is currently no Imam volunteer available to lead religious services for the Muslim community.
- The chaplain visits the SHU at least once a week to speak with residents.

Resident Surveys

- Thirty-three out of 34 residents stated that they were not enrolled in vocational programming.
- Twenty-eight out of the 34 residents are not participating in educational programs.
- Thirty-seven out of 64 survey respondents stated that the facility held services specific to their faith.
- All residents reported that continuous lockdowns were a major obstacle to their rehabilitation efforts.

⁵ Residents have created a music band that consists of five members. According to staff, the band occasionally performs for the resident population.

Recommendations

After inspecting FCI Schuylkill, talking with staff, and interviewing DC Code residents, the CIC recommends the following:

- Limit the occurrence of lockdowns to allow residents greater access to programs.
- Increase enrollment in GED classes available to residents.
- Provide residents with at least two hot meals per day in the cafeteria.
- Case managers should monitor and provide guidance on the evolving status of DC Code offenders' eligibility for FSA credits.
- Coordinate with the DC Mayor's Office on Returning Citizens (MORCA) and the DC READY Center to provide additional support for DC residents' release preparation.
- Ensure that DC residents not eligible for First Step Act credits receive their allotment of three hundred minutes to make phone calls to their family and friends.⁶

⁶ See BOP Program Statement 5264.07 at 14, https://www.bop.gov/policy/progstat/5264_007.pdf.

