U.S. Department of Justice
Memorandum
Federal Bureau of Prisons

Correctional Programs Division

Central Office
320 First Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20534

July 24, 2026

Donald Isaac, Executive Director
DC Corrections Information Council
1400 I Street, NW
Suite 400
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Isaac,

This letter is in response to the draft inspection report received regarding the Corrections Information Council's (CIC) visit to the United States Penitentiary (USP) Hazelton on September 16-18, 2025.

The Bureau is committed to ensuring the safety and security of our staff, the public, and all inmates in our custody. Allegations of misconduct are thoroughly investigated, and based on the findings, appropriate action is taken, if necessary.

I offer the following responses to the report's Key Findings, Supplemental Findings, and Recommendations. Please place the Bureau's responses immediately after the key finding, supplemental finding, or recommendation in the appropriate section within the CIC's report as indicated below:

Key Findings

1. **Daily Living**

   Finding: *Lockdowns are utilized, including during weekends and holidays, the lockdowns have prevented individuals from accessing programs.*

   Response: Institutional lockdowns are implemented when exigent circumstances exist that pose an immediate threat to the safety, security, or orderly operation of the facility. While we recognize the impact on programming, these measures are temporary and necessary to protect the welfare of all inmates and staff, with normal operations resuming as quickly as security conditions permit.

Finding: *Units are also placed on "pending SHU" status, which results in the unit being secured while inmates pending Special Housing Unit placement are housed in General Population.*

Response: New procedures have been initiated since the CIC visit; the entire facility is not locked down due to pending SHU inmates; only the specific unit is secured until space is available in the Special Housing Unit. If the units are secured due to staffing shortages non-custody staff are utilized to cover the vacant position. The Executive Staff and Correctional Services Supervisors make every effort to ensure each institution maintains normal operations procedures daily.

Finding: *Residents expressed concerns about unresponsive staff and unanswered grievances.*

Response: All grievances received are addressed, Unit team staff attempt to informally resolve concerns identified by the inmate population. If informal resolution cannot be achieved, individuals are given forms to initiate the administrative remedy process. Unit Team staff are provided with training on the Administrative Remedy Process on a yearly basis. Inmates can speak with their perspective unit team concerning responses to grievances not received; they can also speak with the Administrative Remedy Coordinator during the noon meal or send the coordinator a written request to review the timeliness of the response. All reports of misconduct within the complex at FCC Hazelton are investigated**;** also, staff receive training during initial training and annual refresher training on communication skills.

Finding: *Limited access to clean sheets, towels, blankets, due to ongoing lockdowns and understaffing.*

Response: Incarcerated individuals can exchange their laundry items daily at a one for one exchange. They can bring their uniforms and linens to laundry during mainline for the exchange. If their housing unit is secured and it is their scheduled day for laundry, staff go to the housing unit for the exchange.

Findings: *Due to the frequent lockdowns, residents spend most of their time confined to their cells with minimal opportunities for recreation or out-of-cell activity.*

Response: FCC Hazelton is implementing a new hybrid Correctional Services roster which will allow the complex to run normally throughout the week. USP Hazelton has implemented a new daily inmate movement schedule at the institution to ensure all inmates have the opportunity to participate in recreational and educational activities.

Findings: *Multiple residents characterized staff as disrespectful and racially biased, reporting negative and discriminatory interactions with certain staff.*

Response: All reports of misconduct within the complex at FCC Hazelton are investigated**;** also, staff receive training during initial training and annual refresher training in communication skills.

2. **Housing**

Finding: *The Chief Psychologist is the acting coordinator for the Challenge Program. The coordinator position has been vacant for two years.*

Response: Currently, FCC Hazelton has two (2) psychologists. The institution and psychology services continue to utilize visiting psychologists from other institutions and telehealth appointments to ensure that daily needs are met at the complex. Recruiting efforts continue through the local community and available positions are posted on the USAJOBS website.

3. **Medical**

Finding: *Health Services staff do not respond to sick call requests, specifically, lack of responsiveness to medical emergencies and staff not taking complaints seriously.*

Response: According to Program Statement 6031.05, Patient Care, sick call "is defined as an inmate-initiated request for care. The sick call complaints are to be made by the inmate in person. The sick call complaint will be processed and documented in the EHR (including applicable vital signs and disposition) by credentialed employees (e.g., Paramedic, LPN, LVN, RN, APP, or physician). Inmate presenting with urgent conditions will be evaluated expeditiously; inmates presenting with routine complaints will be scheduled for a reasonably future sick call appointment (ordinarily within two weeks). Assessment, diagnosis, and treatment will be conducted by credentialed employees."

4. **Mental Health Services**

Finding: *The Psychology Department is currently operating at 50% of its authorized staffing levels, there are currently three (3) psychologists on the FCC Hazelton compound.*

Response: FCC Hazelton has two (2) psychologists. The moratorium is still in effect due to the staffing levels. Due to the current staffing constraints, psychologists assigned to other institutions and offices offer Tele-Health appointments for scheduled encounters to ensure the on-site staff can assist with day-to-day and emergency needs.

5. **Religious Services**

Finding: *Forty-eight survey respondents stated that they do not have access to staff or volunteer leaders specific to their faith.*

Response: FCC Hazelton, located in a heavily homogenous region slanted toward Christianity, volunteers and offers programs for Protestant, Catholic, Jehovah's Witness, Muslim, and Jewish faiths. FCC Hazelton is actively seeking more volunteers.

Recommendations

1. ***Housing:*** *Limit lockdowns to the affected unit when only a single unit must be secured. Reserve facility wide lockdowns for emergencies that impact the entire institution. Discontinue the use of pending "SHU" as a justification for unit lockdowns. Consider creating a specific housing unit for residents who are awaiting SHU placement.*

   Response: Currently the institution does not have the staffing requirement to facilitate a new housing unit for residents who are awaiting SHU Placement. To ensure the institution can maintain normal operations daily, a new roster/schedule has been implemented for staffing in the Correctional Services Department. Correctional Services continues to ensure that units without "pending SHU inmates" are up and running daily.

2. ***Medical:*** *The psychology department should develop and present opportunities for group therapy for residents housed in all units to foster a sense of community and support.*

   Response: Psychology services affords the opportunity of group therapy at each institution at FCC Hazelton. All programs offered for the First Step Act are considered "group therapy," the programs are facilitated by the department's Treatment Specialists. Since the DC CIC visit, FCC Hazelton has hired two new Treatment Specialists." Also, since the visit, a Special Populations Treatment Specialist has been hired, they facilitate programs across the complex.

3. ***Education and Programming:*** *Implement sustainable, alternative programming models to address persistent staffing shortages. Ensure residents maintain access to programs and credit opportunities during lengthy lockdown periods.*

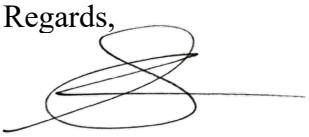
   Response: USP Hazelton implemented a new "move" schedule to increase inmate participation in program areas. The Education Department maintains instruction during institutional lockdowns. During extended lockdowns, teachers create and distribute work packets for GED, ESL, and ACE students. These packets are taken directly to their cells; staff answer any questions concerning the assignments and collect completed packets for scoring the following week.

4. ***Re-Entry:*** *The CIC recommends increasing awareness of D.C. specific resources, including the D.C. Public Defender Service Reentry Navigator. Encourage all D.C. residents within 24 months of release to connect with the D.C. Mayor's Office of Returning Citizens (MORCA) and the READY Center.*

   Response: The DC Navigator books, MORCA information, and READY Center pamphlets are placed in each education department's Community Resource Centers (CRC's) for inmates to view, research, and take notes of beneficial information. The CSOSA Day resource manuals are given to DC inmates that are being released on a

quarterly basis, or when scheduled by the Region. The Reentry Department also uses TRULINC to post DC resources for inmates to view. The Reentry staff also communicate with the DC inmates during the Admission and Orientation program, noon meals, through Cop-outs (inmate request to staff), and via inmate/staff email system.

Regards,



Shane Salem, Assistant Director
Correctional Programs Division