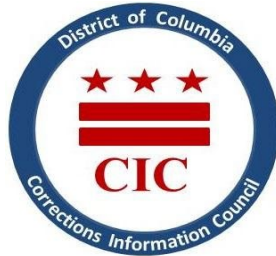


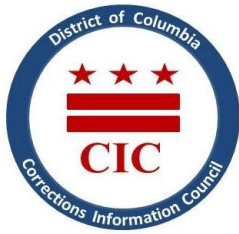
**District of Columbia  
Corrections Information Council**



**Volunteers of America Chesapeake**  
Report on Findings and Recommendations



**January 7, 2025**



## District of Columbia Corrections Information Council

Charles Thornton, Board Chair  
Katharine A. Huffman, Board Member  
Nkechi Taifa, Board Member  
Prechelle Shannon, Board Member

### *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.

### **D.C. Corrections Information Council**

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## Facility Overview

### Facility Profile

**Dates of Inspection:** May 28, 2024

**Location:** Baltimore, MD

**Security Level:** Minimum

**Distance from DC:** 60 miles

**Rated Capacity:** 148

**Population:** 225

**DC Code Offenders:** 58

**Survey Respondents:** 9

### Introduction

Volunteers of America (VOA) is a Residential Reentry Center (RRC) located in Baltimore, Maryland, which houses incarcerated individuals transitioning from prison to regular life. The VOA is a private entity that contracts with the Bureau of Prisons and must comply with policies and procedures mandated through its Statement of Work (SOW). There are three total wings in the facility, two of which are designated for men, and one designated for women. The facility is overpopulated and working to place residents on home confinement or in other RRCs to lower the population. Staff stated they are more likely to send residents back to prison for rule violations because of the overcrowding and to give a new person a chance to transition back into society. The issues from last year regarding a lack of bedding and the inability of DC residents to receive drug tests in DC have now been resolved. In the past year, Asia Gibbs was appointed as the new Director.

### Demographics

The DC residents at the VOA consisted of 56 Black men and two White men. Seventeen of the residents have a high school diploma and 27 have a GED. Nine residents are employed and six are in employment training.

## Key Findings

### Daily Living

- Sixty-three residents live on site at the VOA, and the rest live on home confinement.
- The male wings have 16 rooms with eight beds each, while the female wing has two rooms with ten beds.
- There is a tv viewing area on the male wing that closes at 11:00 PM.
- There are two gyms: one for the men and one for the women. Each is open from 6:00 AM to 11:00 PM. There is a large basketball court in the middle of the facility open to all.

- There are two pay phones, which cost 50 cents each, and a phone available for use at the front desk, although most residents have their own phones.
- There is a library with two desktop computers. The VOA is in the process of acquiring a third computer to meet the standard of one computer per 20 residents. Cameras are available to borrow for video meetings. Laptops are also available for borrowing, but there are limitations for sex offenders.
- The average length of stay varies between 30 days and 1 year. There are about 20-25 new people weekly, and orientation occurs every Monday.
- The grievance box is located in the common area, and the grievance email is posted on bulletin boards in the same area. Grievances go to the VOA corporate office for anonymous review.
- Visiting hours are explained in the resident handbook.

### Medical and Mental Health

- Residents are enrolled in Naphcare<sup>1</sup>, a company that contracts with the BOP to coordinate medical care for incarcerated individuals.
- Royal Minds still provides mental health and drug testing services.
- Telehealth is available at case managers' offices.

### Home Confinement

- Residents on home confinement in DC are no longer required to come to the VOA for urinalysis and can provide a test sample at a CORE location in DC, which then sends the test sample to a lab for analysis.
- There was no waitlist for home confinement, which means that everyone who applies is assessed for home confinement.

### Programs and Services

- There are seven case managers and two employment specialists. There is one vacancy for a case manager.
- VOA staff and interviewees stated the Ready Center has been helpful for DC residents.
- Staff reported that Truist Bank will provide financial management courses soon. Voices for a Second Chance currently offers classes.
- No community-based organizations (CBO) visit the VOA right now. Background checks are required for CBO staff who want to visit without an escort.
- Three MORCA staff were cleared for on-site visits and the rest were offered escorted visitation.

### Employment

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<sup>1</sup> NaphCare, *About Naphcare*, last accessed July 12, 2024, available at <https://www.naphcare.com/about>.

- The BOP requires on-site employment within a physical space, such as an office or restaurant. Remote opportunities, such as teleworking, are usually not allowed because employment specialists must be able to verify hours and locations of employment and conduct monthly on-site visits.
- Some common employers for returning citizens are Home Chef, DC Central Kitchen, Schmidt Baking, and Mid Atlantic Baking.

### Movement

- There is no limit on the number of transport passes given to residents.
- Leisure passes for DC residents allow for five hours of time plus the time to travel to the destination and back. Programming passes typically allow for ten hours and can be extended if needed.
- The VOA gives residents bus cards, SMART cards, and MARC train tickets for travel.
- CARP is a car service available for residents.

### Recommendations

- Acquire enough computers to ensure that there is one computer per 20 residents.
- Visiting hours should be visibly posted in the common area as required by the Statement of Work.
- Continue providing residents access to DC Public Defender Service's Reentry Navigator and encourage all DC residents to connect with the DC Mayor's Office of Returning Citizens.

## Appendix A: Methodology

In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the CIC and the BOP, the CIC gave prior notice of its request to inspect the VOA. Prior to the onsite inspection, the CIC contacted all DC residents via mail to inform them about the CIC's upcoming inspection and the opportunity for a confidential interview with CIC staff.

While planning for the onsite inspection, the CIC reviewed resident population and demographics, facility staffing, significant incidents, disciplinary records, education information, the most recent ACA audit, and administrative remedy filings and response numbers.

The CIC conducted an onsite inspection of the VOA on May 29, 2024. The itinerary consisted of a tour of all areas to which residents have access, discussions with staff, and confidential interviews with D.C. residents.

CIC staff compiled the surveys from the site visit using SurveyMonkey, a business intelligence tool. Extended responses from the surveys were evaluated with comments from other communications to inform analysis and provide context in applicable sections.

In accordance with the MOU between the CIC and the BOP, the CIC provided the BOP with a draft of this report for a review of factual information and an opportunity to respond. The BOP responses are included in the appropriate sections of the report.

