



# **Volunteers of America Chesapeake Residential Re-Entry Center**



**District of Columbia  
Corrections Information Council**

**October 25, 2018**



## **District of Columbia Corrections Information Council**

Charles Thornton, Board Chair  
Katharine A. Huffman, Board Member  
Phylisa Carter, Board Member  
Calvin Woodland, Jr., 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 inmates 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 DC inmates 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 inmates, corrections staff not in leadership, and members of the general public will be kept anonymous and confidential.

### **DC Corrections Information Council**

2901 14<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Ground Floor  
Washington, DC 20009  
Phone: (202) 478-9211  
Email: [dc.cic@dc.gov](mailto:dc.cic@dc.gov)

## Executive Summary

### Volunteers of America Chesapeake: Residential Re-Entry Center

**Date of Inspection:** September 20, 2017

**Location:** Baltimore, MD

#### RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER (VOAC-RRC) PROFILE

*As of September 20, 2017*

**Security Level:** Multi-Level

**Number of Staff:** 25 (Full Time)

**Security Staff:** 18.5 (Full & Part Time)

**VOAC-RRC Capacity:** 148  
(128 males, 20 Females)

**VOAC-RRC Occupancy:** 130

**DC Residents at VOAC-RRC:** 26

**Home Confinement Capacity:** 60

**Home Confinement Occupancy:** 45

**DC Residents on Home Confinement:** 2

#### SUMMARY OF CIC OBSERVATIONS

- A resident reported that the BOP informed him that due to a lack of transportation funds, his transfer to the VOAC-RRC from a prison far away would be delayed for two months, unless he wanted to provide for his own transportation.
- District residents informed the CIC that facility staff assisted only with obtaining Maryland health insurance, no matter where their projected release place is located.
- Residents expressed frustration with staff negative attitudes towards them, one saying that the (non-security) staff members are often disrespectful, which leads to residents having attitudes with staff.
- If a resident loses contact with the VOAC-RRC for half an hour the VOAC-RRC begins its escape process. If two hours pass and the resident is not located, the resident is deemed an escapee and the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) is notified.
- The VOAC-RRC is the only halfway house in the District/Maryland/Virginia (DMV) area that has GPS as part of its program.
- The sex offender treatment program that VOAC-RRC residents attend consists of group sessions where residents are asked to share their experiences. VOAC-RRC residents expressed that when they do not want to share with the group, they get in trouble with the group leader, who then informs the VOAC-RRC that the resident was non-compliant with group instructions. This can lead to the resident receiving an incident report, which carries the potential consequence of termination from the VOAC-RRC program.
- One resident commented that, "nothing about this place (the VOAC-RRC) is DC oriented." For example, the resident explained that there is not much information about or help finding DC jobs.
- Residents reported, that if a resident has a case management meeting, the resident would need to go to the meeting and miss work, rather than going to work and missing the meeting.

- The VOAC-RRC general transportation policies apply to DC residents. DC residents do not have extended time passes (beyond the time frame of the normal six-hour pass) to go to DC, meet with service providers or go to work, and get back to the VOAC-RRC.
- The Director reported that in the three months preceding the CIC visit, three residents were terminated from the VOAC-RRC program and sent back to the BOP.
- While the VOAC-RRC Resident Handbook states that grievances and answers are to be completed in writing, the Director reported that the VOAC-RRC does not keep track of grievances and handles them informally by speaking with residents.

## **SUMMARY OF CIC RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The CIC recommends that the VOAC-RRC allow and assist, or connect residents with services that can assist DC residents with obtaining DC photo-identification and DC medical insurance upon release.
- The CIC recommends that the VOAC-RRC review its hearing process, especially when staff reflections are the only evidence considered in making a determination of removal from the VOAC-RRC.
- The CIC recommends that the VOAC-RRC evaluate the sexual offender group and mental health service providers designated to provide required treatment to residents.
- The CIC recommends that case managers at the VOAC-RRC be trained to assist residents with their adjustment needs, rather than simply referring residents to programs outside of the VOAC-RRC. Towards this end, the CIC recommends that the VOAC-RRC further educate case managers about services that are available in DC as well as MD.
- The CIC recommends that the VOAC-RRC amend its travel – or “pass” policy – to allow residents who need to travel to DC to have longer periods of time for which they can be out of the facility, to account for the travel time between Baltimore and DC.
- The CIC recommends that VOAC-RRC have increased contact with CSOSA for a smoother transition to supervised community release in DC.
- The CIC recommends that the VOAC-RRC follow the grievance process that is explained in the Resident Handbook – including reading written submissions, meeting with residents in the required time frame, and answering residents in writing.

## Table of Contents

I. <u>Introduction</u> .....	7
II. <u>Transition from a BOP Prison to a Contract Residential Re-Entry Center</u> .....	8
A. Overview .....	8
B. Resident Feedback.....	9
III. <u>Overview of the VOAC-RRC</u> .....	10
A. VOAC-RRC at a Glance .....	10
B. Resident Program .....	10
C. Resident Feedback.....	14
D. CIC Recommendations.....	14
IV. <u>Staff</u> .....	15
A. Staff Positions .....	15
B. Staff Qualifications and Training.....	15
C. Resident-Staff Relations .....	17
D. Resident Feedback.....	17
E. CIC Recommendations .....	17
V. <u>VOAC-RRC Program Characteristics</u> .....	18
A. Re-Entry Center Security .....	18
B. Case Management.....	22
C. Medical and Mental Health Services .....	24
D. Disability Services .....	26
E. Employment Opportunities .....	27
F. Transportation.....	29
G. DC Experience at the VOAC-RRC.....	31
VI. <u>Disciplinary Procedures</u> .....	33
A. Overview .....	33
B. Informal Disciplinary Process .....	33
C. Formal Disciplinary Process.....	33
VII. <u>Resident Grievance Procedure</u> .....	35
A. Resident Feedback .....	35
B. CIC Recommendations .....	36

VIII. <u>Visitation</u> .....	36
A. Resident Feedback .....	37
IX. <u>Upper Level: Area Descriptions</u> .....	37
A. Control Center.....	37
B. Female Wing.....	37
C. Male Wing.....	39
D. Dining Area/Kitchen.....	40
E. Activities Center .....	40
F. Computer Lab .....	41
G. Classroom D.....	41
<u>Appendix A. Methodology</u> .....	42

## I. Introduction

The Volunteers of America Chesapeake (VOAC) Residential Re-Entry Center (VOAC-RRC), is a residential re-entry center, or halfway house, that, pursuant to a contract with the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), houses inmates who are within 17 to 18 months of release.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the VOAC-RRC is to facilitate the transition of BOP inmates from prisons back into their communities.<sup>2</sup> The VOAC-RRC facilitates re-entry by providing “case management, employment readiness, substance abuse education, cognitive behavioral programs and coordinating services for mental health, substance abuse and sex offender treatment.”<sup>3</sup> Under its contract with the BOP, the VOAC-RRC generally accepts inmates of all security levels, but is able to reject referrals when unable to meet the ongoing medical needs of a specific individual. Placements in a re-entry center can last up to 12 months.<sup>4</sup> While VOAC and the VOAC-RRC are distinct from the BOP, residents of VOAC-RRC (or any re-entry center) remain under the custody of the BOP, and can be sent back to a BOP prison facility to finish their sentences.

On September 20, 2017, the DC Corrections Information Council (CIC) inspected the VOAC-RRC. The VOAC-RRC is located in Baltimore, MD and has a total capacity of 148 residents (128 male and 20 female). The VOAC-RRC also has a home confinement program, for residents in the last months of the program, and has a capacity of 60 residents. At the time of the CIC inspection, there were a total of 130 residents at the VOAC-RRC, 26 of whom were criminally convicted and sentenced in DC Superior Court. Additionally, there were 45 VOAC-RRC residents on home confinement, one of whom was sentenced in DC Superior Court.

The inspection included discussions with a number of staff people not limited to, but primarily with the Senior Program Director (Director), an employment specialist, two case managers, and an accountability specialist. The Director guided the CIC through the following areas of the VOAC-RRC, listed in the chart below.

**Chart 1: VOAC-RRC Physical Layout**

Lower Level	Upper Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Lobby</li><li>-Individual Meeting Rooms</li><li>-Conference Room</li><li>-Staff Offices</li><li>-Staff Break Room</li><li>-Visitation Room</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Control Center</li><li>-Staff Offices</li><li>-Classroom D</li><li>-Computer Room</li><li>-Activities Room</li><li>-Dining Hall</li><li>-Kitchen</li><li>-Female Wing (2 dorm rooms, lounge area, laundry room, fitness center)</li><li>-Male Wing (16 dorm rooms, 2 lounges, 2 laundry rooms, fitness center)</li></ul>

**Source:** CIC notes.

<sup>1</sup> See FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS, *RRC Topics: Inmate Placement into a RRC*, [https://www.bop.gov/about/facilities/residential\\_reentry\\_management\\_centers.jsp](https://www.bop.gov/about/facilities/residential_reentry_management_centers.jsp).

<sup>2</sup> See VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA CHESAPEAKE, *Fact Sheet: Residential Reentry Center* (on file with the CIC).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> See FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS, *RRC Topics*, *supra* note 1.

After inspecting the physical premise, the CIC looked over the VOAC-RRC Operations Manual and the Employee Handbook. Additionally, the CIC was able to interview ten DC residents about their experiences at the VOAC-RRC.

Prior to the September 2017 visit, the CIC requested a number of documents from the Bureau regarding the operation of the VOAC-RRC. Those documents were not sent to the CIC before the inspection; however, the CIC was able to collect a number of documents during the inspection. See Appendix A for a full list of the documents that the CIC collected and has on file.

The sources of information contained in this report include VOAC staff, residents at the VOAC-RRC, documents gathered by the CIC during the inspection, and CIC staff observations. The report is supplemented by information about the BOP, VOAC, and the VOAC-RRC, found on [bop.gov](http://bop.gov) and [voachesapeake.org](http://voachesapeake.org). See Appendix A for a full explanation of the methods of this report.

## **II. Transition from a BOP Prison to a Contract Residential Re-Entry Center**

### **A. Overview**

The BOP describes the residential re-entry center/halfway house program as a method of reducing recidivism in that individuals are guided back into their communities in a controlled setting, rather than being released directly back to their communities.<sup>5</sup> The BOP explains that residential re-entry centers, “provide a safe, structured, supervised environment, as well as employment counseling, job counseling, job placement, financial management assistance, and other programs and services. RRC’s help inmates gradually rebuild their ties to the community and facilitate supervising ex-offenders’ activities during this readjustment phase.”<sup>6</sup> The BOP refers inmates for a specific time period to a suitable residential re-entry center by considering the following factors:

- The resources of the facility;
- The nature and circumstances of the inmate’s offense(s);
- The history and characteristics of the inmate;
- Any statement by the court that imposed the sentence concerning the purposes for which the sentence to imprisonment was determined to be warranted, or recommending any type of penal or correctional facility as appropriate; and
- Any pertinent policy statement issued by the US Sentencing Commission.<sup>7</sup>

If an inmate is placed in and accepted by a residential re-entry center, he or she will be released on an agreed upon date (between the BOP and the specific re-entry center). The BOP provides the inmate with transportation funds for only the “most economical means of transportation to an RRC.”<sup>8</sup> If an inmate bears the cost of transportation, he or she may select the means.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> See FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS, *RRC Topics*, *supra* note 1.

<sup>6</sup> FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS, *Completing the Transition*, [https://www.bop.gov/about/facilities/residential\\_reentry\\_management\\_centers.jsp](https://www.bop.gov/about/facilities/residential_reentry_management_centers.jsp).

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> See FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS, *RRC Topics: Inmate Transportation to an RRC*, [https://www.bop.gov/about/facilities/residential\\_reentry\\_management\\_centers.jsp](https://www.bop.gov/about/facilities/residential_reentry_management_centers.jsp).

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*



The VOAC-RRC Director discussed with the CIC recent budget cuts for BOP residential re-entry programs that are causing delays and changes in inmate transfers to residential re-entry centers. The Director informed the CIC that on the day before the CIC inspection, there were 52 cancellations of incoming residents – in which the inmate’s arrival date was set further out, due to funding issues.

Within the last year, the Bureau’s budget for re-entry centers has been cut, and contracts with at least 16 RRCs have not been renewed. This has created concerns that persons are spending longer times in prison, with little to no halfway house time, and that some are not being placed in RRCs convenient to home.

## **B. Resident Feedback**

During the CIC’s interviews with residents, the CIC spoke to one resident who had recently been transferred to the VOAC-RRC from a prison over 500 miles away. The resident reported that when it came close to the time for his transfer, the BOP informed him that due to a lack of transportation funds, his transfer to the VOAC-RRC would be delayed for two months, unless he wanted to provide for his own transportation. The resident

informed the CIC that his family paid just under \$400 for a plane ticket to Baltimore. He also informed the CIC that because the BOP would only give a maximum of \$20 for transportation fare to travel from the Baltimore-Washington International Airport (BWI) to the VOAC-RRC, and this did not cover the cost of a taxi cab, the inmate’s mother drove him from BWI to the VOAC-RRC.

**VOAC-RRC resident’s family paid just under \$400 for a plane ticket to Baltimore, so that his transfer from prison to the VOAC-RRC would not be delayed for two months.**

### III. Overview of the VOAC-RRC

#### A. VOAC-RRC at a Glance

The VOAC-RRC has been opened for over 30 years, in which time it has provided contract re-entry services to the BOP.<sup>10</sup> In 2013, VOAC moved the VOAC-RRC to its current location at East Monument Street in Baltimore, MD. The stated mission of VOAC is the following: “Volunteers of America empowers self-reliance and inspires hope. As a church without walls, we do this through personalized housing, ministry, health, and human services that benefit vulnerable individuals, their families and the community.”<sup>11</sup>

Residents coming to the VOAC-RRC from a BOP facility, participate in what is called the Pre-Release Program.<sup>12</sup> When evaluating referrals of inmates from the BOP, the VOAC-RRC considers the following factors:

- 1) Positive institutional adjustment;
- 2) Severe on-going medical needs (the VOAC-RRC does not accept inmates with these needs);
- 3) Open cases or detainers (the VOAC-RRC does not accept inmates with these); and
- 4) Whether the individual agrees to the goals of the program.<sup>13</sup>

While in the Pre-Release Program, residents are expected to secure employment, attend classes, and attend support groups.<sup>14</sup> Case managers and employment specialists assist the residents with scheduling appointments and classes, and searching for employment opportunities. Almost all of the programs and classes that residents enroll in are off-site.

In order to track the residents’ progress, the VOAC-RRC is organized in a level system that is “designed to monitor a Resident’s compliance with program rules and procedures, adjustment and commitment to employment or training, and attainment of program goals and objectives.”<sup>15</sup> Residents who fulfill the requirements of each level are able to progress to the next level, the culmination being that qualifying residents are eligible for placement on home confinement, where they live at home but check in at the VOAC-RRC each week.

The VOAC-RRC reported that in 2016 it served 600 individuals, and 585 of those individuals enrolled in or completed the re-entry program.<sup>16</sup>

#### B. Resident Program

When a resident arrives at the VOAC-RRC, the program begins with a seven-day blackout period, or Level I/resident orientation. The Director explained that residents are only accepted at the

---

<sup>10</sup> See VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA CHESAPEAKE, *Fact Sheet: Residential Reentry Center* (on file with the CIC).

<sup>11</sup> Documented by the CIC on the inspection, based on a poster in the RRC conference room with the mission statement written on it.

<sup>12</sup> See VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA CHESAPEAKE, *Residential Re-entry Center (RRC) Program Overview* (on file with the CIC).

<sup>13</sup> See RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 3-A Resident Admission*, last Reviewed 8/7/17 (part of the CIC’s notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

<sup>14</sup> VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA CHESAPEAKE, *Residential Re-entry Center (RRC) Program Overview*, *supra* note 14.

<sup>15</sup> *Id.*

<sup>16</sup> See VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA CHESAPEAKE, *Fact Sheet*, *supra* note 12.

VOAC-RRC on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, and orientation begins on Friday. During the blackout period, residents are restricted to the facility so that they can familiarize themselves with the program, staff, the physical facility, program levels, facility rules, prohibited acts, the disciplinary process, health insurance options, PREA, etc.<sup>17</sup> By the fifth day, residents must have a physical health exam,<sup>18</sup> and must report current and significant mental, physical, or dental health issues, including drug and alcohol use.<sup>19</sup>

Within 48 hours of entering the VOAC-RRC, residents must meet with their cases managers to begin creating an Individual Program Plan (IPP).<sup>20</sup> During orientation, residents must also give the address where they expect to live upon release. The addresses given will determine whether or not residents are able to travel to other states in order to obtain their documents (ID, birth certificate, etc.) and look for employment. Thus, if a resident wants to look for a job in DC, during orientation they must give a DC address as their intended release place. It is unclear as to whether or not giving the address of a homeless shelter is acceptable; however, as will be discussed in later sections, DC residents noted problems in obtaining transportation funds from the VOAC-RRC when using the address of a homeless shelter in DC as their release location.

After the orientation phase, residents can move to Level II of the program where they are instructed to go into the community in order to obtain certain documents including their birth certificates, social security cards, photo identifications, and to apply for Maryland health care coverage to begin upon release. (Residents are assisted only with obtaining Maryland health care coverage).<sup>21</sup> After residents obtain all of these documents as well as health care, they begin to search for employment. The goal of the VOAC-RRC is to for residents to be employed, and if they are not able to find jobs, to be in school and other types of programming. Programming generally refers to job searching and group programs. Listed on the VOAC-RRC *Group Programming Attendance Sheet*,<sup>22</sup> are the following group programs:

- Employment Orientation
- Employment Readiness
- Financial Management
- Drug and Alcohol Education
- Cultural Diversity
- Transitional Skills

In addition, there is a ten-page resource guide available to residents, which lists the names and addresses of various organizations where they can go for services and obtain assistance in

---

<sup>17</sup> See RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 3-A1 Intake*, last reviewed 1/26/17 (part of the CIC's notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

<sup>18</sup> RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 3-A Resident Admission*, last Reviewed 8/7/17 (part of the CIC's notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

<sup>19</sup> RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 3-A1*, *supra* note 18.

<sup>20</sup> See *id.*

<sup>21</sup> The health care that residents obtain while at the RRC is Maryland state health care. The Director told CIC staff that residents obtain the Maryland coverage to be used after they are released into the community. The BOP must provide health care coverage to people who are in its custody. However, the CIC was told by residents and case managers (RSC/SSC) that residents are utilizing Maryland health care coverage while at the RRC.

<sup>22</sup> VOAC-RRC, *Group Programming Attendance Sheet* (on file with the CIC).

completing the VOAC-RRC program requirements. See the chart below for a list of the types of services in the resource guide, as well as the general locations of those services.

**Chart 2: Summary of VOAC-RRC Resource Guide**

Service	Total Number Listed	Number of Services located in MD	Number/Name of Services Located in DC
Community Agencies (Obtaining identification materials)	8*	6	1 (Vital Records DC)
Counseling and Mental Health Services	11**	8	0
Community Supervision	2	1	1 (Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency - CSOSA)
Local Libraries	22	22	0
Drug and Alcohol Assistance	7	6	1 (So Others Might Eat – SOME)
Educational, Vocational, Employment Training	8	5	3 (Strive DC; Mayors Office of Returning Citizen Affairs – MORCA; Jubilee Housing)
Ex-Offender Services	5	5	0
Housing/Transitional Centers	16	14	2 (Access Housing; SOME)
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>8</b>

*Source: VOAC-RRC Resource Guide (on file with the CIC).*

*\*One listed location is for a service located in Virginia.*

*\*\* Three listed services are hotlines/phone numbers.*

Once a resident has achieved the requirements of each level of the program, their progress is presented to members of VOAC-RRC management, who then decide if the resident is able to progress to the next level. With each level, there are increased privileges, which include increased leisure time and increased time to be off of the VOAC-RRC grounds. If residents have had clean records while at the VOAC-RRC with no misconduct, no incidents when they have been allowed off of the facility grounds, and are in compliance with their individualized plans, they can be considered for home confinement.<sup>23</sup> In the home confinement phase, residents who are employed live in a residence that has a land line, and has also been inspected and verified by a VOAC-RRC staff member.<sup>24</sup> Residents who are on home confinement are tracked using a GPS monitor<sup>25</sup> and must physically check-in at the VOAC-RRC twice a week.<sup>26</sup>

For an overview of the levels of the program, see the chart below:

<sup>23</sup> See *Residential Re-Entry Center Operations Manual, Title 2-B1 Community Monitoring* (part of the CIC's notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

<sup>24</sup> See *id.*

<sup>25</sup> See section (V)(B)( iii) *RRC GPS Monitoring and the Home Confinement Program*, for more information about GPS monitoring and home confinement.

<sup>26</sup> See *Residential Re-Entry Center Operations Manual, Title 2-B1 Community Monitoring*, *supra* note 23.

**Chart 3: Overview of VOAC-RRC Level System**

Level	Level Time Period	Level Description	Level Requirements (when met, the resident can progress to the next level)	Privileges
<b>Level I - Orientation</b>	7 days ("Blackout Period")	-Restriction to the facility (with the exception of medical emergencies and court appearances) -Learn facility rules and regulations -Become familiar with the Resident Handbook -Submit a release address in order to obtain pass privileges	-No incident reports -Complete all orientation objectives (including financial management class and plan, addressing: special assessments; court ordered restitution; fines and court costs; state or local court obligations; other federal government obligations) <sup>27</sup> -Meet all other program requirements	-No privileges
<b>Level II</b>	Between 7-14 days of arrival	-Seek employment -Enroll in classes/programming (adult basic education, GED, colleges, vocational training, job readiness)	-Obtain all identification (birth certificate, social security card, photo ID, medical insurance) -Secure employment and/or complete a minimum of 32 hours of programming -Meet all program requirements -No incident reports for at least seven days	-One religious service per week -One 5-five-hour leisure activity per week
<b>Level III</b>	-Begins, at the earliest, after 7-14 days on Level II	-Continue meeting program goals -Continue seeking employment, working, attending class, and/or volunteering	-Secure a verifiable savings account and /or begin meeting financial obligations -32 hours of programming -Meet all program requirements -No incident reports for at least seven days	-One religious service per week -10 hours of leisure activities per week, with a maximum of five leisure hours per day -One overnight pass (24-52 hours) per week
<b>Level IV</b>	-Begins, at the earliest, after 7-14 days on Level III	-Continue meeting program goals, seeking employment, working, attending class, and/or volunteering -Continue to secure a savings account and/or meeting other financial obligations	-Sign all home confinement conditions and complete all paperwork -32 hours of programming -Meet all program requirements -No incident reports for at least seven days	-One religious service per week -15 hours of leisure activities, with a maximum of five leisure hours per day -One overnight pass (24-52 hours) per week

**Source:** *Volunteers of America Chesapeake, Resident Re-Entry Center Resident Handbook (on file with the CIC).*

*\*Note that to be placed on home confinement, VOAC-RRC staff must first conduct a home visit to inspect and approve the premise, which must have a land line if the resident wants to stay there. Residents who are ineligible for home confinement, are able to progress to 20 hours of free time each week (maximum of five hours per day) and have one 24-52-hour overnight pass per week.*

<sup>27</sup> See RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, 3-C3 Resident Financial Obligations and Assistance.

### C. Resident Feedback

The CIC spoke with a number of residents who had issues at the beginning stages of the program, including during orientation, as well as issues with collecting the required identification documents.

- One resident reported that he did not have orientation. Furthermore, he reported that the resident handbook he received was printed with such light ink, that he was not able to read it.
- Another resident had been at the VOAC-RRC for more than one month when the CIC spoke with him, and he had not yet obtained a photo-identification.
- One resident had been at the VOAC-RRC for two weeks, and was still trying to get a pass to DC so that he could collect his birth certificate, social security card, and photo-identification.
- One resident, who had been at the VOAC-RRC for just under two weeks, was waiting to participate in programming and start job searching until after he obtained all of the required documents, which he had not yet done.
- Another resident reported that he went to DC, and with the help of Voices for a Second Chance (VSC),<sup>28</sup> was able to obtain his birth certificate and social security card. However, the resident also explained that he was forced to obtain a non-driver Maryland photo-identification. He at one point had a DC driver's license.

Residents also provided the CIC with information regarding their experience at the VOAC-RRC, in general. Some resident comments are listed below.

- One resident expressed feeling as though the VOAC-RRC is too strict. For example, the resident said that when residents leave the VOAC-RRC, they are not allowed to bring outside food back into the center.
- Multiple residents expressed feeling greater freedom while in a BOP facility. One resident explained that at the BOP there was recreation, but at the VOAC-RRC, residents are not given time to go outside, apart from when they have to go to work or programming.
- A resident reported that before residents can have leisure time, they need to complete 32 hours of programming.
- Another resident commented that the facility in general is not bad, but the logistics of programming are, "confused."

### D. CIC Recommendations

The CIC recommends that the VOAC-RRC better assist DC residents in obtaining their documentation so that it is done in a timely manner, so that residents are able to seek employment and participate in programming as soon as possible.

There is a particular lack of assistance for VOAC-RRC residents who plan on returning to DC when they are released. The CIC recommends that the VOAC-RRC allow and assist, or connect residents

---

<sup>28</sup> Voices for a Second Chance assists returning citizens in transitioning from incarceration to the community. Counselors and staff assist returning citizens by connecting them to employment services, education services, mental health services, housing services, and more, as well as assisting with practical needs, such as obtaining social security cards and ID's, transportation passes, and clothing. *See* VOICES FOR A SECOND CHANCE, *Ongoing Support: Re-Entry Services*, <https://www.vscdc.org/reentry-services>.

with services that can assist DC residents with obtaining DC medical insurance and DC photo-identification.

## **IV. Staff**

### **A. Staff Positions**

The VOAC-RRC has a total of 25 full time staff people. The day-to-day operation of the VOAC-RRC is largely directed the Senior Program Director (Director), who held that position for 11 months at the time of the CIC inspection. The Director was previously the warden at a Jessup facility in Maryland. The Director has one administrative assistant. There are also two quality assurance managers on staff.

There are two assistant directors of resident services, one who mainly supervises security and the other who mainly supervises case management. There is one intake coordinator who manages incoming residents. The Director informed the CIC that there are six resident service coordinators (RSC), each with a caseload of approximately 15-20 residents. The RSCs serve as case managers for residents who do not have specific programmatic needs. At the time of the CIC inspection, two of the RSCs were on medical leave. In addition to the RSCs, there are two social service coordinators (SSC), who work with residents who have sex offenses, mental health needs, or who are high security residents. Two accountability services staff people track the home confinement program and monitor GPS for certain residents (including residents on home confinement and those with higher security needs). There are two employment placement specialists who assist residents with finding work. One employment specialist has residents last names A-KE, and the other has residents last names KI-Z. There is one facility technician, who supervises security staff. At full staff, there are 18.5 security staff people (3 night staff). The kitchen is staffed by three individuals employed by Aramark.<sup>29</sup> In September 2017, there were four security vacancies and one intake coordinator vacancy.<sup>30</sup>

The Director explained to the CIC that since he began working at the VOAC-RRC, 11 months before the CIC's inspection, a number of staff had been let go for ongoing issues. Most of the replacements were of managing staff and security staff. The Director said that the majority of staff people had been working at the VOAC-RRC for about six months.

### **B. Staff Qualifications and Training**

The qualifications for key personnel – the director, assistant director, employment specialists, RSCs, and SSCs – include having, at minimum, a bachelor's degree, or involvement in an education or career development program with work experience, training, and/or college credits that amount to the equivalent of a bachelor's degree.<sup>31</sup> Promotions are also encouraged from within the VOAC-

---

<sup>29</sup> See ARAMARK, *infra*, note 101.

<sup>30</sup> See Figure 1 for a chart of VOAC staff positions and hierarchy.

<sup>31</sup> See RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 6-A Staff Quality and Selection*, last reviewed 3/26/17 (part of the CIC's notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

RRC, for the purpose of staff retention.<sup>32</sup> As an example, during the inspection the CIC spoke with one of the SSCs who started at VOAC-RRC in security, then moved to an RSC position, and then moved to the current SSC position.

According to the VOAC-RRC Operations Manual, VOAC-RRC staff members participate in year one orientation and training, as well as additional trainings every year after. The amount of training and the topics cover vary depending on the capacity in which someone works at or with the VOAC-RRC.

- Administration and Professional Staff
  - First Year: 40-hour orientation and 40 hours of training
  - Each Year After: 40 hours of training
- Full time Staff
  - First Year: 40-hour orientation and 40 hours of training
  - Each Year After: 40 hours of training
  - Training Topics Include: Security procedures; supervision of offenders; signs of suicide risk; suicide precaution; use of force; report writing offender rules and regulations; rights and responsibilities of offenders; fire and emergency procedures; safety procedures and key control; interpersonal relations; cultural and social lifestyles; cultural diversity training; Volunteers of America code of ethics; first aid and CPR; counseling techniques; crisis intervention; sexual harassment; legal issues; handling of toxic/caustic materials.
- Case Workers
  - 40 hours of annual training
  - Training Topics Include: standards of conduct and ethics; security; safety; fire; medical; emergency procedures; supervision of offenders including training on sexual abuse and assault; use of force.
- Clerical Staff
  - First Year: 40-hour orientation and 16 hours of training
  - Each Year After: 16 hours of training
- Part-Time Staff, Volunteers, Contract Personnel
  - First Year: 40-hour orientation and 16 hours of training
  - Each Year After: 16 hours training
  - Training Topics Include: facility rules; security and operational procedures; handling of toxic/caustic materials; and Volunteers of America Code of Ethics.<sup>33</sup>

In addition to the trainings listed above, one case manager who the CIC spoke to said that the staff members are given a BOP training on transgender issues.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> See RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 6-C Staff Performance and Standards*, last reviewed 1/26/17 (part of the CIC's notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

<sup>33</sup> See RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 6-B Staff Development and Training*, effective 9/13/10; last reviewed 8/30/17 (part of the CIC's notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

<sup>34</sup> The case manager reported that in the last year there was one transgender female who was a resident at the RRC. The case manager told the CIC that the RRC policy for transgender residents is that they can live with the gender with whom they identify.



### **C. Resident-Staff Relations**

In the VOAC-RRC Resident Handbook, the importance of residents' relationships with staff members is highlighted. The handbook reads:

“How well you communicate and consult with staff will directly determine how you will progress in the program and will affect such things as level progression and privileges.

The RRC staff is professionally trained to help residents resolve problems and clarify goals. Staff cannot help you unless you communicate with them. Staff relations are, therefore, a requirement while you are a resident at RRC.”<sup>35</sup>

### **D. Resident Feedback**

Residents who the CIC interviewed, had both general and specific concerns with staff members at the VOAC-RRC. There was a tone communicated, by multiple residents with whom the CIC spoke, that they do not feel as though staff people are respectful towards residents. Residents expressed frustration with staff attitudes, one saying that the (non-security) staff often have attitudes with residents, which leads to residents having attitudes with staff people. For example, one resident often feels that when he makes a request, staff people act as though the request is a burden and say that they will get to it at another point in time. When given this response by staff, the resident does not trust that the request will be met, and reported that answers to his requests are often delayed, if given at all. The resident's perception was that staff people delay responding for the purpose of being irritable.

Another resident described staff as having bad attitudes and as “going-off” on residents, when they have not been provoked by the resident. Multiple residents also felt as though some staff members threaten residents in order to force residents to comply with what the staff person wants. One resident reflected that when residents express frustration, there is a particular staff person who asks the resident, “Are you threatening me?” and then warns the resident that staff have the power to send residents back to prison, saying all it takes (to send a resident back to prison) is for a staff member to say that he or she was scared because a resident said something threatening. Another inmate said that he hears from staff, “I will send you back to the BOP,” as though individual staff people have the power to do so.

One resident explained that when staff members have not completed something for a resident, they blame it on other staff members, broken equipment, and outside agencies.

### **E. CIC Recommendations**

Staff-resident relationships are important because staff control much of the resident's progression through the levels of the VOAC-RRC program. Transitions are stressful for people who are personally experiencing the transition, as well as for those who are assisting with the transition.

---

<sup>35</sup> VOAC-RRC RESIDENT HANDBOOK 7 (on file with the CIC).

In the trainings listed in the Operations Manual, there is no mention of staff trainings focused on self-care for staff.<sup>36</sup> This would be a helpful and productive addition to the VOAC-RRC, for both staff and residents, in that staff persons' ability to manage their own stress and frustration, will better enable them to help and effectively communicate with residents.

A concern is that in the disciplinary process, the resident perspective is not being adequately considered – that when a staff person says something, it is regarded as automatically true by the hearing officer, in determining the veracity and seriousness of write ups. The CIC recommends that the VOAC-RRC review its hearing process, to ensure that residents are able to participate in a meaningful way, especially when staff reflections are the only evidence considered in making a determination of whether or not to remove a resident from the VOAC-RRC.

## **V. VOAC-RRC Program Characteristics**

### **A. Re-Entry Center Security**

Based on the BOP evaluation criteria considered when placing inmates in particular residential re-entry centers, generally, the inmates' BOP security classification is not considered. However, a residential re-entry center's specific characteristics, including security characteristics, can influence the contract it has with the BOP, if, for instance, the re-entry center has the capacity to house inmates with specialized needs. For example, the VOAC-RRC has certain location and program characteristics, which are noted in its contract with the BOP, that enable the VOAC-RRC to accept residents with higher security or particularized needs – including residents who were incarcerated for sex crimes.

#### **i. VOAC-RRC General Security**

The VOAC-RRC has a full security staff of 18.5 full and part time security employees. At minimum, there must be two staff people, one male and one female, on site at all times.<sup>37</sup> Security staff members work in eight-hour shifts, with the peak time being from 3pm-11pm.<sup>38</sup> While on the inspection the CIC was told that the security shifts are from 8am-4pm (five security staff); 4pm-12am (four and one half security staff); 12am-8am (two security staff). Supervisory staff persons – program director, assistant directors, and quality assurance managers – are on site from 8am-5pm Monday-Friday, and at other times, a member of the supervisory staff is on call.<sup>39</sup>

The VOAC-RRC is video monitored, with a video feed that can be viewed from monitors at the control center. There are a total of 32 cameras in the facility, and the video feed from 16 cameras can be viewed at the control center at one time. In addition, the Director can view the security footage from his mobile phone. There are no security cameras in the residents' dorm rooms or the bathrooms.

---

<sup>36</sup> It is possible that such training is in a section of the Operations Manual or Employee Handbook that the CIC was not able to review.

<sup>37</sup> See RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 6-D Staffing Plans and Program Communication*, effective 9/13/10; last reviewed March 2016 (part of the CIC's notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

<sup>38</sup> See *id.*

<sup>39</sup> See RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 6-A Staff Quality and Selection*, Last reviewed 3/26/17 (part of the CIC's notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

In order to keep track of the residents, there are four standing counts per shift and three security shifts per day, for a total of 12 standing counts every day.<sup>40</sup> Two security staff conduct each count.<sup>41</sup> When the count is announced residents have five minutes to return to their dorm rooms, where they must present their VOAC-RRC identification.<sup>42</sup> Residents who are on kitchen detail, in meetings with case managers, using the computer lab, or are on a pre-authorized visitation, are exempt from the count.<sup>43</sup> Additionally, phone counts are conducted for residents who are off site.<sup>44</sup>

The VOAC-RRC takes seriously the ability to be in contact with residents and know where residents are at all times. Residents must plan specific times when they are going to leave the facility, plan specific places to go, and stick to that schedule when they leave. Whenever residents enter and exit the VOAC-RRC, they must sign in at the electronic signature pad at the control center. There are occasional exceptions made when a resident calls to say he or she will be late in coming back from an approved location, and brings with them verification that they were at that place. In addition, residents on GPS monitoring must keep their GPS battery charged so that accountability specialists are actually able to track them. In both situations, where a resident is late or allows his or her GPS battery to die, if the resident loses contact with the VOAC-RRC for half an hour (i.e. they are do not return to the facility within half an hour of when they are supposed to, cannot be located for half an

**If an RRC resident loses contact with the RRC for two hours, the resident is deemed to be an escapee, the U.S. Marshals services is notified, and the resident faces possible termination from the RRC program.**

hour, or there is a tamper alert on the GPS indicating that it has been removed and an operations specialist is unable to contact the resident), the VOAC-RRC begins its escape process by calling the resident, searching the facility and community, and calling the people on the resident's contact list.<sup>45</sup> The Director or other supervisory staff is notified as well as the resident's case manager.<sup>46</sup> If two hours pass and the resident has not been located, the resident is deemed an escapee and the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) is notified.<sup>47</sup> Any time the escape process is initiated, the resident will most likely be written up for a disciplinary infraction.

Moreover, whenever the USMS is alerted of an escape, there is the possibility that the resident will be terminated from the VOAC-RRC program, and returned to a BOP prison.<sup>48</sup>

In addition, to signing in and out, residents are all searched for contraband upon entering and exiting the facility. This search includes a pat down of the resident, a search of the residents' shoes,

---

<sup>40</sup> See RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 2-B Resident Security, Accountability, and Electronic Monitoring*, Effective 9/13/10; Last Reviewed 3/26/17 (part of the CIC's notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

<sup>41</sup> See *id.*

<sup>42</sup> See *id.*

<sup>43</sup> See *id.*

<sup>44</sup> See *id.*

<sup>45</sup> See RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 2-B Resident Security, Accountability, and Electronic Monitoring*, Effective 9/13/10; Last Reviewed 3/26/17 (part of the CIC's notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

<sup>46</sup> See *id.*

<sup>47</sup> See *id.*

<sup>48</sup> See *id.*

an inspection of the belongings they have with them, and VOAC-RRC staff can administer breathalyzer tests.

In general the VOAC-RRC has the ability to conduct searches of residents, in order to control the possession of contraband. Characteristics of VOAC-RRC searches that are permissible include: searches that are regular and unannounced; searches of residents, resident property, resident vehicles, and resident dorm spaces, and any part of the facility; searches conducted when residents are not present; all visitors' and residents' property, packages, and mail.<sup>49</sup> Any staff member can initiate a search if they have reason to believe that contraband or stolen property is present.<sup>50</sup> Strip searches and manual or instrumental inspections of body cavities are prohibited.<sup>51</sup> Failure of a resident to comply with a permissible search can lead to the resident's termination from the program.<sup>52</sup>

Finally, residents are allowed to have cell phones while at the RCC; however, for security purposes, these phones cannot have cameras or internet capabilities.<sup>53</sup>

In order to regularly document resident activity, VOAC-RRC statistics, as well as security measures and events, the administrative assistant generates and sends Monitoring Reports to the Director that include: the number of residents coming into the facility in the past month; the number of residents leaving the facility in the past month; the number of clients served in the past month; the number of clients leaving due to: escape, dissatisfaction, court order or release, satisfactory release; key fobs administered for rounds monitoring; information on quarterly facility shakedowns; all residents in the facility from 9pm-6am with exceptions; and resident passes.<sup>54</sup>

a. *Resident Feedback*

Residents expressed feeling like the amount of counts within the facility is a nuisance. In general, residents also made comments that the VOAC-RRC often feels more restrictive than do prisons. Two residents with whom the CIC spoke felt that, essentially, in a residential re-entry center there should be more freedom, in that their opportunities to be in the community were not aligning with what they envisioned their level of freedom in a residential re-entry center would be.

ii. **VOAC-RRC Higher Security Capacity**

The VOAC-RRC is located in an area that is conducive to accepting residents convicted of sex offenses. There is an industrial train track on one side of the facility and on the other side is a Potts & Callahan recycled demolition operation site. The VOAC-RRC is also one of the only facilities that

---

<sup>49</sup> RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 2-D Searches and Contraband*, Effective 9/13/10; Last Reviewed 3/26/16 (part of the CIC's notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

<sup>50</sup> *Id.*

<sup>51</sup> *Id.*

<sup>52</sup> *Id.*

<sup>53</sup> See RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 2-B2 – Resident Account – Cell Phones*. Last Reviewed 8/30/17 (part of the CIC's notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

<sup>54</sup> See RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 2-B Resident Security, Accountability, and Electronic Monitoring*, Effective 9/13/10; Last Reviewed 3/26/17 (part of the CIC's notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

provides GPS monitoring for certain residents. The combination of location and GPS monitoring explain why the VOAC-RRC serves DC residents. The majority of DC-sentenced individuals who are residents of the VOAC-RRC have sex offenses. The Director also reported that the VOAC-RRC has accepted transfer residents from DC's Hope Village Residential Re-entry Center, due to "allegations of corruption," and there have also been two transfers of residents from Fairview, the female residential re-entry center in DC.

### **iii. VOAC-RRC GPS Monitoring and the Home Confinement Program**

On September 20, the CIC had the opportunity to speak with one of two accountability specialists, who provided details about the VOAC-RRC's GPS system as well as the home confinement program. The VOAC-RRC is responsible for the GPS program and equipment, as part of its contract with the BOP – the VOAC-RRC is the only halfway house in the DMV area that has GPS as part of its program. The VOAC-RRC has VeriTracks<sup>55</sup> equipment that is used to track residents who have sex offenses and must register as sex offenders, residents who have are high security, and residents who are placed on home confinement. The VOAC-RRC, rather than the BOP, makes decisions about which residents will be GPS monitored.

The VOAC-RRC has the capacity to place 60 residents on home confinement, and at the time of the CIC inspection, there were 42 residents on home confinement. There were a total of ten residents living at the VOAC-RRC who were on GPS monitoring – six of whom were registered sex offenders. There were a total of 12 DC residents on GPS monitoring – two of whom were on home confinement. From these numbers, it appears that DC residents were the only residents on GPS monitoring. Finally, the accountability specialist reported that on average, there are fifteen female residents on home confinement, and female residents are more frequently placed on home confinement, as compared to male residents.

The GPS device consists of a black box (the GPS) that is attached to a resident's ankle by black straps, brackets, and tabs. When a resident is placed on GPS monitoring, he or she must meet with an accountability specialist for an orientation on how the GPS works and what the resident is required to do while on GPS monitoring. Once the GPS is strapped to the resident, they are not allowed to remove it at all, without the assistance of an accountability specialist. Therefore, the resident is instructed not to yank or jerk the strap in any way, so that they do not trigger a "tamper alert." A tamper alert is when an accountability specialist is notified that the strap of the GPS has or may have come off, and the implication is that the resident has attempted to remove it. If there is a tamper alert, the resident must see an accountability specialist as soon as possible. The GPS batteries have to be charged for one continuous hour, once in the morning and once in the evening, for a 12-hour life. Residents can use a cord to attach the GPS to an outlet. Residents are told not to charge the GPS when they sleep, because a jerking movement could trigger the tamper alert. If the battery dies, this can be considered an escape, whereby the USMS will be notified.<sup>56</sup> The accountability

---

<sup>55</sup> "VeriTracks is a technology tool for the criminal justice community. We provide the latest technology for customer programs who desire to improve their offender supervision capabilities and reduce recidivism by intensely monitoring offenders and sharing data among correctional and law enforcement agencies." SATELLITE TRACKING OF PEOPLE LLC, VERITRACKS: STOPPING CRIME IN ITS TRACKS 1, available at [http://www.corrections.com/system/vendor\\_product/pdf/158/VeriTracks.pdf](http://www.corrections.com/system/vendor_product/pdf/158/VeriTracks.pdf).

<sup>56</sup> The accountability specialist explained the process for designating a GPS monitored resident as an escapee as the following: 1) there is an issue with the GPS (dead battery, tamper, etc.); 2) the accountability specialist notifies the director that tones/vibrations were sent to the GPS, and the resident should know to call in. The last known location of the resident is also reported; 3) security and staff contact the people who are on the resident's contact list and begin an

specialist can send different tones and vibrations to the GPS that the resident will feel, and be reminded to charge the battery or contact an accountability specialist.

*a. Resident Feedback*

The CIC spoke with one resident who had been on GPS monitoring. He said that he did not know that he would be on GPS monitoring for so long – he was told 40 days, and at the time that the CIC spoke to him he said it had been at least 60. The resident said about the GPS, “it still feels like confinement.”

**iv. Random Drug Testing**

In addition to video monitoring the facility and searching residents and their belongings when residents come and go from the facility, the VOAC-RRC conducts random drug testing of residents. The VOAC-RRC takes approximately 700 samples per month, and has a contract with a private company that completes the urinalysis. Residents who have a noted drug use habit, were reported by the Director to be tested around four times every month. For other residents, the random drug tests are less frequent and residents who are in the home confinement program are also required to drug test at the VOAC-RRC. According to the Director, the night before a drug test, the VOAC-RRC compiles a list of about ten residents to be tested the next day. The resident is called in the morning, and unless it interferes with the resident’s work schedule, the resident is instructed to report to the VOAC-RRC within two hours for testing. If a resident is on home confinement or in DC, this two-hour time frame still applies.

The Director reported that recently there has been a high incidence of K2 use at the VOAC-RRC. When residents are suspected to have overdosed on K2, VOAC-RRC staff called 911. The night before the CIC inspection, an ambulance was called to the VOAC-RRC due to a K2 overdose. The Director commented that in many cases, it seems that by the time the ambulance arrives at the VOAC-RRC, the resident who was suspected of overdosing appears to be fine, and will oftentimes refuse to go to the hospital.

**B. Case Management**

Case management at the VOAC-RRC includes Resident Service Coordinators (RRC) and Social Service Coordinators (SSC). SSCs are distinguished from RSCs because SSC’s caseloads include residents who have sex offenses, mental health issues,<sup>57</sup> and are higher security.<sup>58</sup> Case managers meet weekly with residents.<sup>59</sup> During these weekly meetings, residents design their schedules for the week, so that VOAC-RRC staff members know what programs residents are in and where residents will be at all times. For each resident who is admitted to the VOAC-RRC, their assigned case

---

escape report (USMS is contacted); 4) if the resident is found within two to four hours, the escape is cancelled and the resident will be written up but the USMS is no longer involved; 5) if the resident is not found in two to four hours, the resident is deemed an escapee.

<sup>57</sup> The RRC does not follow BOP classifications for individuals who have mental health needs.

<sup>58</sup> The RRC follows BOP security designations for low, medium, high, and greater severity – but this does not influence where residents are housed within the RRC.

<sup>59</sup> See RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 6-A Staff Quality and Selection*, Last reviewed 3/26/17 (part of the CIC’s notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

manager receives their presentence report as well as any assessments that were completed while the resident was in prison.

Case managers first meet with incoming residents to create an Individual Program Plan (IPP), which, at minimum, includes: employment/employability; education/vocational training; post release housing/residence development; financial responsibilities; social support; mental/physical health issues; substance abuse/use; and groups and other outside programs.<sup>60</sup> As residents continue through the VOAC-RRC program, case managers maintain resident case files that include the following information: Photo ID; program records (progress notes, weekly summaries, IPP, assessments); employment records; financial information; discipline/incident reports; community activities (sign in/out sheets, home visits, daily contact information); correspondence and medical reports and forms/urine record; referral information and arrival documents; release information; and driving/miscellaneous information.<sup>61</sup>

On September 20, 2017, the CIC was able to speak with two case managers – one SSC who had primarily sex offenders on her caseload, and one RSC. The SSC with whom the CIC spoke generally had a caseload of between 16 and 25 residents. At the time of the inspection, ten residents on the SSC’s caseload were sentenced in DC. The RSC had a current caseload of 26 residents, who were a combination of high security residents and residents with public safety factors. Three of the RSC’s residents were sentenced in DC, and one of these residents was female. Two of the DC residents were making post-release plans in Maryland, and one was planning to return to DC. The RSC indicated that frequent offenses of residents on her caseload include robbery and drug offenses. During discussions with the CIC, these case managers provided information regarding services they are able to connect residents to and their reflections on the effectiveness of some of these providers – including information about mental health care, employment opportunities, and the experience of DC Residents at the VOAC-RRC. Following sections specifically discuss these services, as well as case manager and resident reflections on those services.

*i. Resident Feedback*

The DC residents with whom the CIC spoke expressed mixed views regarding their case managers. One resident described his relationship with his case manager as argumentative – in that the he and the case manager have a tendency to argue back and forth. The resident was dissatisfied with his case manager because the case manager did not register him for a program that the resident wanted to participate in. In addition, the resident felt that the case manager was unfair because the case manager completed an incident report when the resident was late getting back to the facility because he got lost taking the bus back to the VOAC-RRC.

Another resident who the CIC interviewed expressed overall dissatisfaction with the resident’s particular case manager, who the resident described as disorganized. The resident said that in general, the case manager does not listen to what the resident wants. Furthermore, the resident explained that on numerous occasions the case manager failed to give the resident accurate

---

<sup>60</sup> See RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, Effective 9/13/10; Last Reviewed 3/26/16 (part of the CIC’s notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

<sup>61</sup> See RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 3-B Resident Risk Assessment, Individualized Program Plans, Targeted Interventions, and Progress Reports*, Effective 9/13/10; Last Reviewed 3/26/16 (part of the CIC’s notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).



information: the resident was sent to get his birth certificate but obtained the wrong birth certificate, and the case manager gave the resident the wrong address of a service provider. In addition, the resident said that the case manager refused to help the resident with certain things, including getting the resident transportation funds so that the resident could go to DC and get the correct birth certificate, and refusing to give the resident a copy of the receipt for the land line that had been installed at the resident's home address (relevant to home confinement).

ii. *CIC Recommendations*

The CIC recommends that case managers at the VOAC-RRC be trained to assist residents with their adjustment needs, rather than simply referring residents to programs outside of the VOAC-RRC. It would help if case managers had an understanding of what needs to be met and what service providers can best meet those needs, not just help residents with scheduling. This applies to local as well as DC service providers.

C. **Medical and Mental Health Services**

i. **Medical Health Care**

According to the SSC, when inmates are released from a BOP prison, they are given 30 days' worth of medication, which is usually mailed to the VOAC-RRC. When residents enter the VOAC-RRC, health, medical, dental, mental, substance abuse, and physical conditions are assessed at intake.<sup>62</sup> If residents at the VOAC-RRC are deemed to have a mental health need and asked to consent to an evaluation, the resident's refusal to consent can result in their termination from the VOAC-RRC program and return to a BOP prison. The same is true for a resident who refuses to take prescribed medications and is subsequently "unstable." There was one case that the RSC could remember where a resident was sent back to a BOP prison facility after refusing to consent to a medical evaluation.

**"All employed residents must assume financial responsibility for all medical and dental services and, as directed by the coordinator, make their own arrangements to receive treatment."**

When at the VOAC-RRC, residents are connected to mental health services in the community. The RSC informed the CIC that residents are to be promptly sent to Health Care for the Homeless<sup>63</sup> to get a Tuberculosis vaccination. After orientation, residents are assisted in obtaining Maryland medical insurance. The Director informed the CIC that the Maryland health insurance obtained by residents is to be used only after they are released. The Director said that the VOAC-RRC covers the costs of health care for residents and is reimbursed by the BOP. However, the SSC informed the CIC that residents obtain Maryland health insurance to be used while at the VOAC-RRC, and also after they are released. The VOAC-RRC Operations Manual suggests that Residents are, in fact, expected to obtain their own medical insurance, to be used while at the VOAC-RRC:

---

<sup>62</sup> See RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 4-A Resident Health Care*, Effective 9/13/10; Last Reviewed 1/26/17 (part of the CIC's notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

<sup>63</sup> Health Care for the Homeless is an organization that works to "end homelessness in Baltimore and beyond...In partnership with caregivers, advocates, donors and (its) neighbors without homes (it) provide(s) health care and housing supports, and advocate(s) for justice for all." HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS, <http://www.hchmd.org/>.



“All employed residents must assume financial responsibility for all medical and dental services and, as directed by the coordinator, make their own arrangements to receive treatment...unemployed residents requiring dental services will be referred to the University of Maryland walk-in emergency dental clinic or the Health Care for the Homeless Agency...unemployed residents or employed residents without funds to pay for medical treatment may be transferred back to a federal institution for treatment...The Coordinators will assist all residents needing medical assistance in applying for benefits.”<sup>64</sup>

Residents are able to receive care from Health Care for the Homeless, which is approximately 35 minutes away from the VOAC-RRC. Any medication that needs to be administered to residents at the VOAC-RRC is kept at the Control Center, and information about residents’ medication is to be electronically stored and managed on SecurManage.<sup>65</sup>

*a. Resident Feedback*

One DC resident who the CIC interviewed explained that he has a pinched nerve in his right eye that makes his eye turn red; however, since he had been at the VOAC-RRC, he had not received any medical care for this issue.

**ii. Mental Health Care**

The VOAC-RRC connects residents to two contracted mental health providers: Huber & Associates (Huber) and Gaudenzia Outpatient (Gaudenzia). Huber runs mental health programs and programs targeted toward sex offenders. Gaudenzia runs drug treatment and mental health programs.<sup>66</sup> It was reported that residents who are required to have sex offender treatment can have as many as three sessions at Huber per a week, one session at Gaudenzia per week, and meet once a month with a psychiatrist who prescribes residents’ medication.

*a. Resident Feedback*

The case managers with whom the CIC spoke shared information, learned from residents, about Huber, the service through which some residents attend sex offender programs. The SSC heard reports from residents that the staff at Huber are former drug addicts, and that the program is operated out of a residence. VOAC-RRC residents were concerned that women and children live at the location, a concern based on observations of female hygiene products and children’s toys on the premises. The program at Huber consists mostly of group sessions where residents are asked to share their experiences. VOAC-RRC residents have expressed that they do not always feel

---

<sup>64</sup> See RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 4-A Resident Health Care*, “SecurManage is a web-based software package that provides everything needed to manage residential community release facilities, day reporting centers and work release facilities...SecurManage tracks and manages all aspects of the residents’ stay in the facility.” SECURMANAGE, <http://blog.securmanage.com/>.

<sup>65</sup> See RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 4-B Resident Medication Intake and Records*, Effective 9/13/10; Last Reviewed 3/2016 (part of the CIC’s notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

<sup>66</sup> “Serving about 17,000 individuals annually, Gaudenzia operates 161 drug and alcohol treatment programs at 90 facilities for men and women in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware. Services include specialty programs for pregnant and parenting mothers, adolescents, and people suffering from co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse.” GAUDENZIA, *About Gaudenzia*, [http://www.gaudenzia.org/about\\_us](http://www.gaudenzia.org/about_us).

comfortable in this setting; however, when they do not want to share with the group, they get in trouble with the group leader, who then informs the VOAC-RRC that the resident was non-compliant with group instructions. When the Huber group leader claims that a resident is non-compliant in sessions, it can lead to the resident receiving a write-up (or incident report) at VOAC-RRC, which carries the potential consequence of termination from the VOAC-RRC program. Residents have reported to the SSC that there is not a consistent group leader at Huber from session to session. In addition, some residents have reported being at sessions where all the residents do is watch a movie. Finally, residents feel that the requirements – in terms of time and the frequency of groups – adversely affect their employment, because residents are not allowed to miss the sessions for which they have been scheduled.

#### **i. Mental Health Crisis and Emergency Medical Care**

The SSC informed the CIC that if there is ever a mental health crisis at the VOAC-RRC, the resident is placed in the computer lab,<sup>67</sup> otherwise known as the fishbowl because it is glass on three sides. Supervisory staff are contacted regarding the issue and 911 is called. There are three hospitals in the area surrounding the VOAC-RRC. Johns Hopkins is about five minutes away, Bayview Medical Center is five to ten minutes away, and Franklin Square (Mervy Medical Center) is about 20 minutes away.

For medical treatment of minor or major injury or illness, residents are taken to a clinic following approval by supervisory staff.<sup>68</sup> If any resident needs surgery, it must be approved by the senior program director.

#### **ii. CIC Recommendations**

The CIC recommends that the VOAC-RRC evaluate the mental health service providers that are providing needed treatment to residents. This evaluation should include assessing the physical premises, the content of sessions, the quality and competency of staff, and the format of sessions. The CIC also recommends that following an evaluation of the current mental health services, if the services are found to be inadequate, the VOAC-RRC should contract with a different mental health service provider that can run productive and resident-responsive group sessions.

### **D. Disability Services**

In the VOAC-RRC Resident Handbook, physical disabilities are addressed in the following way: “It is the policy of VOAC/RRC to accept residents with disabilities and to make reasonable accommodations as requires by the Americans with Disabilities Act.”<sup>69</sup> The Handbook goes on, briefly, to say that residents who have physical disabilities can work with their case managers to revise and tailor programs and activities.<sup>70</sup>

The VOAC-RRC has two entrances, one that leads to the lower level, and the other that leads to the upper level and the control center – residents use the entrance that leads to the upper level. There is

---

<sup>67</sup> See Section IX(F) for a full description of the computer lab.

<sup>68</sup> RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 4-A Resident Health Care*.

<sup>69</sup> VOAC-RRC RESIDENT HANDBOOK 8 (on file with the CIC).

<sup>70</sup> See *id.*

a ramp leading up to the upper level entrance. Additionally, within the building, there is a wheelchair lift next to the staircase that connects the upper and lower levels. At the time of the CIC inspection, there were two residents who were physically disabled – one resident used a wheelchair and the other had a prosthetic leg. The Director explained that although there are not specifically handicap dorm rooms for residents, the VOAC-RRC does attempt to accommodate resident needs. For example, beds in the dorm rooms that the two above-mentioned residents were staying in were arranged differently than in other rooms, in order to give the residents more physical space.<sup>71</sup>

The VOAC-RRC does not have specific services for residents who are blind, deaf or hard of hearing, and does not employ staff trained to assist individuals who are hearing or sight impaired. The RSC recounted that there was one blind resident in the recent past who experienced difficulty adjusting to the VOAC-RRC and caused damage to the facility. The VOAC-RRC unsuccessfully attempted to place the resident in alternative housing, but ultimately, the resident was sent back to a BOP prison to finish his sentence in prison.

Finally, VOAC-RRC case managers assist non-English speaking residents in using a language line.

## **E. Employment Opportunities**

Residents at the VOAC-RRC are assisted in identifying employment opportunities by two employment specialists. In addition, there are two career centers not far from the VOAC-RRC where many residents go to try to find employment opportunities: Northwest Career Center (REC Center) at Mondawmin Mall, and the Eastside Career Center. The SSC reported that case managers often refer DC residents to the Mayor's Office on Returning Citizens Affairs (MORCA),<sup>72</sup> which then refers residents to organizations like Project Empowerment.<sup>73</sup> The RSC noted that DC residents have frequently been to Voices for a Second Chance (VSC)<sup>74</sup> and Helping Individual Prostitutes Survive (HIPS),<sup>75</sup> as well.

The RSC reported that most residents – including those residents who are sex offenders – are typically able to find jobs, with many having success at a warehouse or through a temp agency. When asked what the most helpful employment service is for residents, the RSC replied that the career center is probably the most helpful – because it assists residents with child support, traffic

---

<sup>71</sup> See Sections IX(B) & IX(C) for further explanation on the layout of the dorm areas.

<sup>72</sup> “The Mayor's Office on Returning Citizen Affairs (MORCA) provides useful information for the empowerment of previously incarcerated persons in order to create a productive and supportive environment where persons may thrive prosper and contribute to the social, political and economic development of self, family, and community.” MAYOR'S OFFICE ON RETURNING CITIZEN AFFAIRS, *About MORCA*, <https://orca.dc.gov/page/about-morca>.

<sup>73</sup> Project Empowerment is a work readiness program designed to provide “unemployed District residents with opportunities to grow in education, training, and subsidized employment placements each year. Project Empowerment achieves its mission of moving participants into the workforce by partnering with government, non-profit, and private businesses across the DMV area to recruit, train, match, and coach candidates for successful employment.” DEPT OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, *Project Empowerment Program*, <https://does.dc.gov/service/project-empowerment-program>.

<sup>74</sup> See VOICES FOR A SECOND CHANCE, *Ongoing Support: Re-Entry Services*, *supra*, note 28.

<sup>75</sup> “HIPS promotes the health, rights, and dignity of individuals and communities impacted by sexual exchange and/or drug use due to choice, coercion, or circumstance. HIPS provides compassionate harm reduction services, advocacy, and community engagement that is respectful, non-judgmental, and affirms and honors individual power and agency.” HIPS, *About*, <http://www.hips.org/about.html>.

violations and tickets, and assists and provides financial support for residents seeking to obtain a commercial driver's license.<sup>76</sup>

There is a new program within the VOAC-RRC where residents who are unemployed, are able to participate in unpaid work detail at the facility.<sup>77</sup>

Residents who are employed (or have some income) are expected to contribute 25% of their earned/gross income to the VOAC-RRC as subsistence payment – whether the source of that income is a job, retirement fund, social security, or disability.<sup>78</sup> Waivers and reductions are available under certain circumstances.<sup>79</sup> An incident report is completed by staff for residents who fail to pay the contribution within 48 hours of when they receive their paycheck/disbursement.<sup>80</sup> If the resident pays within 24 hours of the incident report, then there is an informal resolution of the incident.<sup>81</sup> If the VOAC-RRC does not receive the payment within 72 hours of the paycheck (or within 24 hours of the incident report) the incident is processed for formal investigation and hearing.<sup>82</sup>

#### **i. Resident Feedback**

Many DC residents interviewed by the CIC expressed a general dissatisfaction with their employment opportunities. At the same time, many also expressed that they liked and had been assisted by a specific employment specialist. One resident expressed having a positive experience with a VOAC-RRC employment specialist, who helped him fill out job applications, and who the resident described as, “really good.” Another resident explained that the he had been going to Project Empowerment in DC, and was set up for employment as a “janitorial engineer.” On the other hand, a different resident said that he asked appropriate VOAC-RRC staff for job listings, but had yet to receive any.

While one resident described his rapport with a VOAC-RRC employment specialist as “good,” and felt that the VOAC-RRC helped him in getting his together, the resident also explained that “nothing about this place (the VOAC-RRC) is DC oriented.” For example, the resident explained that there is not much information about or help finding DC jobs. Moreover, the resident said that rather than helping with the job search, he was left with the impression that staff just send residents out into the community to find work on their own. In addition, the resident said that he found a job at Home Depot; however, a member of the VOAC-RRC staff did not sign a necessary form in adequate time, and the job offer was rescinded. One problematic area that the resident highlighted was time constraints and case management meetings, in that residents have limited flexibility to change their schedules once they have been set. For instance, if a resident has a case management meeting, the resident would need to go to the meeting and miss work, rather than going to work and missing the meeting. The resident felt that any flexibility in scheduling was dependent on the

---

<sup>76</sup> The RSC did not distinguish if the referenced career center was the Northwest Career Center (REC Center) or the Eastside Career Center.

<sup>77</sup> Work detail refers to a work within the facility that residents complete.

<sup>78</sup> RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, 3-C3 *Resident Financial Obligations and Assistance*, Effective 9/13/10; Last Reviewed 9/7/17 (part of the CIC's notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection). Residents, when they become employed, also update their financial plan and budget. *See id.*

<sup>79</sup> *See id.*

<sup>80</sup> *See id.*

<sup>81</sup> *See id.*

<sup>82</sup> *See id.*

particular case manager and the case manager's mood on a particular day. This resident also expressed that he wanted to go to a job interview but could not because of a scheduled meeting with a case manager.

The resident also highlighted the lack of resources at the VOAC-RRC. For example, the resident explained that there are only six computers in the computer lab for job searching purposes, and those computers are meant to be used by all 140 residents. Furthermore, the resident said that the VOAC-RRC has blocked many Internet sites, and that residents are not able to access Google Docs.

Another resident explained that he was currently unemployed and had been going to the Northwest Career Center at Mondawmin Mall. The resident explained that going to the career center does not count as employment, and so bus tokens are not given for travel costs to the center. The resident also said that he preferred detail in prison to detail at the VOAC-RRC, because in prison detail is paid.

One resident was told by his case manager that he could not return to the job that he got in DC as a tow truck driver, because the job was too far away from the VOAC-RRC.

Finally, multiple residents expressed frustration with the low frequency with which passes (permission to leave the facility) are given and the difficulty in obtaining these passes. Residents explained to the CIC that passes were previously given out by the employment specialists, but recently a different staff person took over because the staff person believed, according to one resident, that the employment specialist gave out too many passes.

## **ii. CIC Recommendations**

The CIC recommends that there be flexibility with case management appointments, when those appointments conflict with resident's work schedules.

Referrals to MORCA are helpful; however, because residents have tight time constraints (six hours to get to DC, go to service providers, and travel back to Baltimore) it would be helpful and more productive if residents could go directly to specific service providers. Furthermore, if case managers were more familiar with DC services, it would facilitate their ability to help their assigned residents plan for life in DC. Alternatively, DC residents may return to DC without the tools and opportunities necessary for the basis of a productive re-entry.

## **F. Transportation**

In the VOAC-RRC, residents are able to go into the community in order to collect identification documents, search for jobs, go to therapy, receive medical care, and go to work. Residents' off-site activities are approved and documented by their case managers, and residents get a "pass," which indicates the time period that a resident can be outside of the facility. Generally, according to VOAC-RRC staff, passes are for a six-hour time period. As stated in the VOAC-RRC Resident Handbook, residents must call VOAC-RRC staff when they arrive at an approved location.<sup>83</sup> Residents also carry a paper copy of their weekly schedules with the approved places, and times, that they may travel to that week, and must have to have someone at all of the visited locations sign the

---

<sup>83</sup> VOAC-RRC RESIDENT HANDBOOK 13 (on file with the CIC).

schedule to verify that the resident was, in fact, at the approved locations at the approved times.<sup>84</sup> Available transportation for VOAC-RRC residents includes the bus (there is a stop one block from the facility), metro, light rail, and cabs.<sup>85</sup> Bus route schedules were reported to be available at the control center. The MARC train is also available for residents traveling between Baltimore and DC. The VOAC-RRC Operations Manual states that bus tokens are to be provided to indigent residents.<sup>86</sup>

If there is no public transportation available between the VOAC-RRC and the resident's workplace, approved residents can receive permission to have a vehicle, park it in the VOAC-RRC parking lot, and use it only to get to and from work.<sup>87</sup> The CIC did not speak with any resident who indicated that they had a car that was kept at the VOAC-RRC.

The CIC asked the SSC if there was any additional assistance for residents who have difficulty coordinating travel and are unable to travel to DC, and other programs, on his or her own. The SSC answered that the VOAC-RRC has not had to make such accommodations, because people who have serious cognitive disabilities are not typically placed in halfway houses.

The VOAC-RRC general transportation policies apply to DC residents: there is no transportation policy that applies specifically to DC residents, who must travel over an hour each way in order to connect with their local service providers. Initially, in order to be approved to travel to DC, residents must specify to their case manager that they intend to return to DC post-release. The Director indicated that there is no limit on transportation assistance to DC for approved activities. However, case managers seemed to indicate during the inspection that the VOAC-RRC provides travel funds for the first time residents go to a service provider, but after that, some service providers, not the VOAC-RRC, will cover the cost of the resident's travel. DC residents do not have extended time passes (beyond the time frame of the normal six-hour pass) to go to DC, meet with service providers or go to work, and get back to the VOAC-RRC. Residents can call the facility if they are going to be late and ask their case manager for a time extension. If the extension is given, the resident must bring proof explaining where they were during the extended period.

#### **i. Resident Feedback**

**The process of “getting the train fare/bus fare is like pulling teeth.”**

DC residents reported varying amounts of access to VOAC-RRC transportation funds. One resident reported that he had regular access to transportation tokens. Another resident reported that he had not had any consistent access to tokens. Another resident

reported feeling that the staff person who gives out transportation tokens is verbally abusive, has a bad relationship with many residents, and is disinclined to give residents transportation tokens or tickets. Another resident described that the process of “getting the train fare/bus fare, is like pulling teeth.” Another reported that he did not receive transportation tokens to get to DC in order to collect a photo ID, and so he paid for the transportation fare himself. After refusing to give the

<sup>84</sup> VOAC-RRC, *Weekly Schedule* (on file with the CIC).

<sup>85</sup> RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 1-D Safe Driving and Vehicle Transportation Process*, Effective 9/13/10; Last Reviewed 3/26/16 (part of the CIC's notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

<sup>86</sup> *See id.*

<sup>87</sup> *See id.*

transportation tokens, the resident's case manager commented, "How are you going to get your license without a job?"

One resident described his experience with getting back and forth to DC in the time he was allotted. The resident went to DC and was working with a service provider, but it took longer than expected and the resident thought that he was going to be late getting back to the VOAC-RRC. The resident had to call the VOAC-RRC five or six times before a staff member answered, so that the resident could ask the appropriate case manager for a time extension. Eventually the case manager did call the service provider and the resident was able to explain the situation.

The resident said the six-hour pass to go to DC and back is "absolutely not enough time" and that it feels like the VOAC-RRC is not accounting for travel time, especially when considering that it is a "difficult process to get to DC with public transportation." One resident said that a VOAC-RRC staff member submitted an escape report to the BOP after the resident was late getting back to the VOAC-RRC from DC due to train delay. He reported that in filing the escape report, the staff member commented to him, "I'm going to send you back, I don't like you."

A resident reflected that they did not believe that the VOAC-RRC would have a problem with the resident having a job in DC. However, the resident explained that if travel time takes two to four hours and the resident works for eight hours, the resident could be gone for 12 hours, and the VOAC-RRC must get approval from the BOP before a resident can be gone for that long.

## **ii. CIC Recommendations**

The CIC recommends that the VOAC-RRC amend its travel – or "pass" policy – to allow residents who need to travel to DC to have longer periods of time. Lengthening the pass times for these residents to account for travel time, would allow DC residents to comfortably travel to DC, meet with service providers, collect documents, search for employment, go to work – all things that residential re-entry centers were created to facilitate.

## **G. DC Experience at the VOAC-RRC**

### **i. Accessing DC from the VOAC-RRC**

Another time constraint that DC residents experience is related to the home confinement program and random drug testing. For residents on home confinement, they are expected to go to Baltimore for mandatory VOAC-RRC appointments. For example, a resident with a sex offense could have to return the Baltimore area multiple times per week for sex offender programs, psychiatrist appointments, for mental health groups, and to meet with his or her case manager. DC residents who travel to DC for work or are on home confinement in DC are also expected to meet the same time requirements as other residents for the VOAC-RRC's random drug tests.<sup>88</sup>

### **ii. DC Residents: Connections with CSOSA**

Residents who are set to leave the VOAC-RRC are assigned a supervision officer through the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA). Case managers at VOAC-RRC reported that

---

<sup>88</sup> See Section V(B) for more information about the RRC's drug monitoring.

they are typically contacted by CSOSA 30 days before a resident's release from the VOAC-RRC with notice of who the resident's supervision officer will be. Any communication with CSOSA is typically over the phone or by email.

Prior to a DC resident's release from the VOAC-RRC, residents submit a release address that must be approved by CSOSA. This is especially relevant for residents who must register as sex offenders, because there are specific criteria for where they can and cannot live. If the address is not approved, and if a resident is unable to find, or does not have time to find another address and have that address approved, the resident will be homeless. One case manager explained that a number of DC residents end up being released from the VOAC-RRC and living at homeless shelters. VOAC-RRC has noted that, generally, there are three places that DC sex offenders are referred to by CSOSA: (1) Coalition for the Homeless; (2) Community Action Group; and (3) Safe Haven Outreach.

The RSC noted that it can also be difficult to have a resident's supervision changed from DC to MD, if the resident wants to stay in MD, rather than return to DC. The RSC said that this change can be particularly difficult for sex offenders and it is often dependent on the severity of the offense.

*a. CIC Recommendations*

The CIC recommends that VOAC-RRC have increased contact with CSOSA for a smoother transition, in terms of the resident's relocation and case management.



## VI. Disciplinary Procedures

### A. Overview

Residents at the VOAC-RRC are subject to the VOAC-RRC disciplinary process, which staff explained as having both informal and formal components. Individuals at residential re-entry centers, coming from incarceration at a BOP facility, are still under the custody of the BOP. For residents, this means that the consequence of a rule violation or the outcome of the disciplinary process can be return to a BOP prison. Violations at the VOAC-RRC can range from minor to major. The VOAC-RRC Resident Handbook details prohibited acts and their severity levels in a 12-page appendix.<sup>89</sup>

### B. Informal Disciplinary Process

For minor violations of VOAC-RRC rules and for some first time infractions, residents go through the informal disciplinary process. The Director reported that there are approximately five or six informal hearings each day at the VOAC-RRC.

Typically the informal process is initiated when a staff member “writes up” (or writes an incident report about) a resident for a violation of the VOAC-RRC rules. Staff said that the resident will then meet with the Director and will be given some sort of warning or penalty. The resident can be given a verbal warning by itself, or a

**The Director reported that there are approximately five or six informal hearings each day at the RRC.**

warning can be paired with extra detail (work around the VOAC-RRC).<sup>90</sup> Other sanctions that staff mentioned are loss of visitation, loss of passes, and “full-house restriction,” meaning that the resident cannot leave the VOAC-RRC, with the exception of medical emergencies.

The staff described that a common situation that leads to a write-up is when a resident is late returning to the VOAC-RRC, but failed to call and inform a staff member that they were running late. If a resident is late (within a certain time period), but can prove that they were late due to legitimate circumstances (such as getting lost on public transit) the resident will be informally sanctioned.

### C. Formal Disciplinary Process

Formal disciplinary proceedings at the VOAC-RRC should follow BOP procedures.<sup>91</sup> Staff reported that from the infraction to the hearing, the formal disciplinary process is to be completed within 72 hours.

The Director reported that in the three months preceding the CIC visit, three residents were

**The Director estimated that there are between 6 and 12 formal disciplinary hearings each week.**

---

<sup>89</sup> See VOAC-RRC RESIDENT HANDBOOK 30 (on file with the CIC).

<sup>90</sup> RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 3G Resident Discipline and Responsibility*, Effective 9/13/10, Last Reviewed 3/26/17 (part of the CIC’s notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection); *See also* RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 1-A Facility Sanitation and Maintenance Plan*, Last reviewed 3/14/17 (part of the CIC’s notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

<sup>91</sup> *See id.*

terminated from the VOAC-RRC program and sent back to the BOP. The Director estimated that there are between 6 and 12 formal disciplinary hearings each week. According to the Director, most of the formal hearings occur on Mondays for infractions that occurred over the weekend.

After a resident infraction occurs, there is to be an in-house investigation followed by a hearing, which is conducted by senior staff. The Director explained that the VOAC-RRC tries not to send residents back to the BOP following their first infraction, unless that infraction is for an escape<sup>92</sup> or physical conduct toward a VOAC-RRC staff member. Typically, removal from the VOAC-RRC is a targeted response used when residents have three or more disciplinary incidents or are a safety risk.

Following a decision of the disciplinary hearing officers, the VOAC-RRC senior program director submits a request to the BOP, the BOP approves (or disapproves) the request, and then the USMS removes the resident.<sup>93</sup> The Director informed the CIC that while, technically, the BOP has the discretion to dismiss a charge when an infraction comes before it for approval, the director had not to date had a case be dismissed by the BOP. If the USMS removes a VOAC-RRC resident, between removal and placement in a BOP facility, the resident is held the Chesapeake Detention Center.<sup>94</sup>

According the VOAC-RRC staff, residents, regardless of whether they are at the VOAC-RRC, Chesapeake Detention Center, or a BOP facility, have 20 days in which to file an appeal of the hearing decision. The appeals process also follows the BOP procedure. On removal, a resident's property is inventoried and held for 30 days, during which a family member of the resident can collect it from the VOAC-RRC.<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup> See Section (V)(B)(iii) for an explanation of a how residents are deemed to be an escapee.

<sup>93</sup> RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 3H Resident Transfer, Release, Removal, Death*, Effective 9/13/10, Last Reviewed 3/26/16 (part of the CIC's notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

<sup>94</sup> The Chesapeake Detention Center is located in Maryland and was previously a supermax facility. The Center is now mainly used as a federal pretrial holding facility.

<sup>95</sup> See *Title 3H Resident Transfer, Release, Removal, Death*, *supra*, note 95.

## VII. Resident Grievance Procedure

The VOAC-RRC Resident Handbook explains the resident grievance procedure. Residents are told:

“Residents that feel that they have been unjustly accused of violating any rule contained in this handbook should take the following steps to file a grievance. There is a box for Grievance concerns located near the Control Center. This box is labeled and secured. It is checked daily by Program Director/Designee. Our goal is to assist in resolving all resident complaints before submitting a grievance form. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU FOLLOW THESE STEPS. This procedure has been established to ensure that you are treated fairly.”<sup>96</sup>

The Handbook then outlines three steps that residents are to take: written grievance to the Program Director, to the Vice President if against the Program Director, and appeal to direct supervisor, with meeting with resident in three days and written response within two days after that..<sup>97</sup>

**The Director reported that the RRC does not keep track of grievances and handles them informally by speaking with residents.**

In contradiction to the policy laid out in the handbook, the Director reported that the VOAC-RRC does not keep track of grievances and handles them informally by speaking with residents. The Director reported that in September 2017, there had been one or two documented resident grievances. The Director said that the majority of grievances concern home confinement,

in that residents wanted to be on home confinement but were not approved for placement.

### A. Resident Feedback

One resident expressed concern that grievances that residents write and give to staff are not answered, but instead simply “disappear.” The resident reported that residents do not hear back from staff about the grievances. Furthermore, the resident did not know if appeals to regional and central offices were sent to the appropriate offices.

Another resident reported that he filed at least two grievances while at the VOAC-RRC, and never got a response to either of them.

Another resident described a grievance that he filed for missed meals. The resident explained that residents are supposed to be given bagged meals to take with them when they will be out during the day on a pass. The resident explained that the grievance was filed a week before the CIC visit. The resident’s understanding of the grievance process was that grievances were supposed to be answered within seven days.

---

<sup>96</sup> VOAC-RRC RESIDENT HANDBOOK 29 (on file with the CIC).

<sup>97</sup> *See id.*

## B. CIC Recommendations

The CIC recommends that the VOAC-RRC follow the grievance process that is explained in the Resident Handbook – including reading written submissions, meeting with residents in the required time frame, and answering residents in writing.

The CIC recommends that VOAC-RRC staff track and respond to all resident grievances.

## VIII. Visitation

On the lower level of the VOAC-RRC, there is a visitation room where residents are able to visit with their families, on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. The Director related that the visitation schedule was designed to be on weekends and holidays based on the VOAC-RRC goal for residents to search for jobs, work, and/or participate in programming during the week.

During orientation, residents complete a list with names of individuals whom they would like to have verified and approved to visit them following the orientation week. Visitor lists can have up to ten names, although, former VOAC-RRC residents are not allowed to visit current residents.<sup>98</sup> According to the Director, each resident can have four visitors at one time and the visiting time is from 12pm to 4pm.<sup>99</sup> CIC staff read a sign in the visitation room that said visits are limited to two hours. Guests are able to bring food to residents; however, any food brought must be eaten in the visitation room. Residents are not permitted to bring food with them into the dorm areas. On the first visit, visitors are allowed to bring residents extra clothes and laundry detergent that the resident can bring to the dorm area. This is allowed on the first visit only, because it is expected that the resident will soon progress to a program-level where he or she can obtain social passes to go home, exchange clothes,<sup>100</sup> buy laundry detergent, etc.

Visitors are prohibited from bringing bags and/or cell phones into the VOAC-RRC. There are no lockers for visitors to store their personal belongings, and typically, visitors cannot leave belongings at the front desk. According to the Director, there is a one-time exception for first-time visitors who bring prohibited belongings, where they will still be allowed to visit a resident.

At the time of the CIC tour, the visitation room was set up so that there were 12 tables each with two chairs, and space for an additional two chairs. There were extra chairs stacked in the corner of the room. The tables appeared to be only two to three feet away from each other. The wall of the visiting room closest to the entrance is windowed so that a staff person can observe ongoing visits. There are two bathrooms in the visiting area, marked for visitor use only. The Director explained that residents are not allowed into these bathrooms, because the VOAC-RRC is concerned that allowing them to do so would facilitate the flow of drugs into the VOAC-RRC.

In response to CIC questions regarding the apparent lack of space in the visitation room in light of the number of residents as well as the limited window of time for visits, the Director explained that

---

<sup>98</sup> RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 2-A Facility General Access and Visitor Guidelines*, Effective 9/13/10; Last Reviewed 8/7/17 (part of the CIC's notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

<sup>99</sup> According to the Operations Manual, residents are allowed to have three registered visitors at one time. *Id.*

<sup>100</sup> See Section IX(B) for an explanation on the amount of clothing that each resident is allowed to have.

the visitation room is not typically full, because once residents have been in the program for some time, start working, and progress to higher program-levels, they are given social passes so that they can visit their families in the community, rather than at the VOAC-RRC.

If a resident needs to have a legal visit, the Operation Manual states that such visits may occur between 8am and 9pm, or at the discretion of the Program Director.<sup>101</sup>

#### **A. Resident Feedback**

One resident commented that the biggest issue so far experienced at the VOAC-RRC was a lack of communication with family.

### **IX. Upper Level: Area Descriptions**

Throughout the second floor there are information boards that have resources and facility materials for residents. The CIC noted examples of information and resources provided, including: VOAC-RRC updates/policies; case worker list and schedule; home confinement weekly schedule; forms (such as grievance forms); , urinalysis rules; daily shift activities schedule; administrative remedy process; visitation information; resident maintenance; BOP contact information; employment information; K2 information; PREA hotline; and pretrial services/reentry services information.

Locations of the boards included the following places: by the central control desk; one employment board outside of the activities room; one board with resident forms next to control center; one with schedules and rules outside of the computer lab; two information boards in the female dorm wing; and four information boards in the male dorm wing.

There were 12 pay phones on the upper level (two of which were in the female lounge) that are available for resident use. Calls cost one dollar for every four minutes. The CIC was told by staff that there is no charge on the payphones when residents call a hotline. Residents are permitted to have cellphones without cameras or Internet functions.

#### **A. Control Center**

Every time residents enter or exit the VOAC-RRC, they must stop at the control center, which is at a central location on the upper level. At the control center residents check in and out by signing an electric signature pad. Residents and their property are also searched at the control center. Security camera monitors are also at the control center.<sup>102</sup> Residents' medication is stored in an office behind the control center, and is administered to residents at the control center.

#### **B. Female Wing**

The female wing is arranged so that there is a lounge at the entrance as well as a fitness center and laundry room. The dorm area and bathroom is behind a closed door. The lounge in the female wing has seating for seven people. There is a television and DVD player available on weekdays between

---

<sup>101</sup> See *Title 2-A Facility General Access and Visitor Guidelines*, *supra*, note 103.

<sup>102</sup> See Section V(B) for an explanation of security measures at the RRC.

5pm and when residents go to sleep. There was no remote control for the television, but residents are able to change the channel at the monitor.

There is one laundry room for female residents to one side of the lounge. The laundry room has two washing machines and two dryers, which are free to use, but residents must purchase (or have a family member deliver)<sup>103</sup> laundry detergent. Alternatively, residents are to be allowed to have family members clean their clothing, and then bring the clothing back to the VOAC-RRC.<sup>104</sup> For both female and male residents, the laundry room is open from 10am-9pm.<sup>105</sup> The Operations Manual has a few provisions regarding laundry, including that laundry detergent is to be provided by the VOAC-RRC for indigent residents.<sup>106</sup> Residents with physical disabilities are supposed to receive clean bed sheets once every week.<sup>107</sup>

On the other side of the female-wing lounge is a fitness center that has two standing exercise bikes and four weight machines. The Director explained that there are no fitness program offered, although, some female residents teach other residents exercises.

The lounge leads to the female dorm area. According to the Director, for both men and women, the VOAC-RRC does not designate residents to certain dorm rooms based on their BOP security classification. Upon entering the dorm area, the Director, in compliance with PREA regulations, announced that there were males entering the female wing. There were two dorm rooms and one bathroom. Each dorm room is split into two sides by a low wall. There are ten twin beds in each room, with five beds on either half of the room.<sup>108</sup> Each half of the room also has ten lockers, where residents are able to keep personal belongings. Residents are also able to keep some personal belongings around their bed area. The Operations Manual states that there should be, “a minimum of 50 square feet of floor space for the first resident of the room, (and) each additional resident shall increase the square footage of space by 25 feet in the sleeping area.”<sup>109</sup> Residents are allowed to decorate the space around their beds.

Female and male VOAC-RRC residents are restricted in the type and amount of personal property they are allowed to keep with them at the VOAC-RRC. Each resident is allowed to have seven pairs of undergarments (seven pairs of underwear, seven pairs of socks, etc.), seven tops, seven bottoms (residents may have seven pairs of pants, seven skirts, etc.), seven dresses, and five pairs of shoes (included in this number is a pair of shower shoes). Residents may also keep with them five books and five DVDS. When residents have family visitors, or when they are eventually given passes to

---

<sup>103</sup> See Section VIII for information about visitation, which is when a family member can bring a resident laundry detergent.

<sup>104</sup> RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 3-D Resident Personal Property and Hygiene*, Effective 9/13/10; Last Reviewed 3/26/2016 (part of the CIC’s notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

<sup>105</sup> RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 3-E Physical Plant Access*, Last reviewed 3/26/17. (part of the CIC’s notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

<sup>106</sup> See *Title 3-D Resident Personal Property and Hygiene*, *supra*, note 109.

<sup>107</sup> See *id.*

<sup>108</sup> The operations manual says that there are supposed to be no more than five to eight residents in each dorm room. See *id.*

<sup>109</sup> See RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 1B Water Supply and Environmental Conditions*, Effective 9/13/10; Last Reviewed 3/26/16 (part of the CIC’s notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

visit their family, they are permitted to switch out clothes they currently have with new clothes brought to them, or that they bring to the VOAC-RRC. All resident property is inventoried by staff.

There is no limit on the toiletries that female and male residents can have. The Director reported that the VOAC-RRC does not provide tampons/pads for women (with the exception being on arrival): women must buy these products off site and then bring them into the VOAC-RRC.<sup>110</sup>

### **C. Male Wing**

The male wing has a North and South side. The CIC noted that there were two guards standing on each side of the wing, in the open areas. On both sides of the wing there is one lounge (one television and seven seats in each lounge) and one laundry room (four washing machines and four dryers). The policies regarding television use and laundry that were noted in the section above, “Female Wing,” also apply to the male residents. The fitness center for men is located outside of the male wing. The male fitness center had one bike, two workout benches, and 11 weight machines.

There are a total of 16 male dorm rooms. Each dorm has eight beds, with four on each side of a low wall. There are eight lockers on each side of the room. There is one bathroom in between every two dorm rooms, with a door leading to it from each of the adjoining dorm rooms. A total of 16 residents share one bathroom that has two showers, two toilet stalls, and three sinks. At the time of the CIC visit, there was at least one bathroom under construction and it was padlocked until it could be repaired. The residents who typically used that bathroom were instructed to use a bathroom across the hall, so that 32 residents were assigned to one bathroom.

There was one room in the male wing that, at the time of the CIC tour, housed two physically disabled residents – one in a wheelchair and the other who had a prosthetic leg. To accommodate for these residents, the VOAC-RRC arranged the beds in their assigned room, so that there was slightly more space for the residents to move around.

Facility staff recalled that there was previously a resident who came to the VOAC-RRC from United States Penitentiary, Administrative-Maximum (ADX) in Florence, Colorado, and said that the transition was difficult for this resident, in part, because there was too much environmental stimuli, given that the resident had come from a facility where inmates are kept in solitary confinement. A DC resident reported that he was directly transferred from ADX to the VOAC-RRC, where he was housed with seven other men and shared a bathroom with at least fifteen other men.

The policies and rules for male resident’s personal property is the same as for women, which is explained in the section above, “Female Wing.”

#### **i. CIC Recommendations**

The CIC recommends that the VOAC-RRC use rooms that are not at full capacity (if available) to house a smaller number of residents who might need a greater period of time to adjust to group settings. On an agency level, the BOP should not release persons directly from solitary confinement in the community, and instead, step down men in maximum custody to interaction with others prior to halfway house placement.

---

<sup>110</sup> See Title 3-D Resident Personal Property and Hygiene, *supra*, note 109.

## D. Dining Area/Kitchen

Female and male residents eat in a dining room that shares a wall with the VOAC-RRC kitchen. The dining area had 11 round tables (with attached seats). The capacity of the dining area is 135 people. Two of the tables are designated for female residents. Meal times are posted by a wall on the kitchen:

Weekdays: Breakfast: 5:30am-6:30am; Lunch: 12pm-1pm; Dinner: 5pm-6pm

Weekends: Breakfast: 6:30am-7:30am; Lunch: 11am-1pm; Dinner: 5pm-6pm

There is a rotation of meals, and all meals are approved by a dietician.<sup>111</sup> There was a sign in the dining area instructing residents about meals to-go: “All residents out of building can sign up for lunch bag and or late dinner tray with a food service staff member.” Residents who have specific dietary needs or religious dietary needs are provided with accommodating meals.<sup>112</sup> If a resident’s dietary needs cannot be accommodated, which would usually be due to a medical need, it can result in the resident being transferred out of the VOAC-RRC.<sup>113</sup>

The dining area has four vending machines (two with drinks and two with snack foods) that residents can access anytime during the day. However, residents must eat in the dining area. Residents are not permitted to have any food in the dorm areas.<sup>114</sup> There is also an ice machine and a microwave available in the dining room.

The kitchen is staffed by three Aramark<sup>115</sup> employees, who prepare all food at the VOAC-RRC. There are also VOAC-RRC residents per kitchen shift who work cleaning detail in the kitchen. Residents cannot cook, but they are allowed to clean, move goods, and serve food. The kitchen has one walk-in freezer, two large two-door refrigerators, and a large pantry with dry goods. To one side of the kitchen is a loading dock.

Security staff members may bring lunch with them or can eat VOAC-RRC provided meals. Non-security staff members are allowed to leave the facility for lunch.

## E. Activities Center

The Activities Center is essentially an indoor basketball court, with glass walls on three sides, and can be viewed from the control center. There is one basketball hoop in the Center. Male and female residents may use the activities room, but not at the same time.

---

<sup>111</sup> See RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 1H Food Service*, Effective 9/13/10; Last Reviewed 3/26/16 (part of the CIC’s notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

<sup>112</sup> See *id.*

<sup>113</sup> See *id.*

<sup>114</sup> See RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, *Title 1-A Facility Sanitation and Maintenance Plan*, Last reviewed 3/14/17 (part of the CIC’s notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

<sup>115</sup> Aramark is a company that provides facilities with food, services, and uniforms. See ARAMARK, Services, <http://www.aramark.com/services>.



## F. Computer Lab

The VOAC-RRC computer lab is used by residents to search for jobs and work on their resumes. Residents sign in and out of the computer lab, and male and female residents are permitted to use the lab at the same time. The lab is a glass room that can be seen from the control center. At the time of the CIC visit, there were six computers in the lab. The Director reported that there are typically fifteen computers available for resident use, but about ten had been removed from the lab for “Cyber clean up.” All of the computers are site blocked, and the Director explained that the blocks are targeted toward porn websites.

Outside of the lab, there was a schedule posted for times when residents can use computers:  
Monday-Sunday: 10am-12pm; 1pm-4pm; 6pm-9pm.<sup>116</sup>

Two employment specialists are available to assist in the lab and help residents search for jobs. There is a posting on the wall that states which residents are assigned to which employment specialist. There was a bookshelf along one wall of the lab containing a random selection of books.

## G. Classroom D

There is one classroom space in the VOAC-RRC, where orientation, job fairs, classes on budgeting, time management, life skills, cultural diversity, and some staff meetings take place. The classroom has a number of two-person tables that were pushed together to create a large conference table. There are two white boards on otherwise blank, white walls. Residents are not allowed to be in the classroom without a staff person, and the room is kept locked.

---

<sup>116</sup> See also, RESIDENTIAL RE-ENTRY CENTER OPERATIONS MANUAL, Title 3-E *Physical Plant Access*, Last reviewed 3/26/17 (part of the CIC’s notes, taken during the document review portion of the September 20, 2017 inspection).

## Appendix A. Methodology

District residents are frequently referred Volunteers of America Chesapeake's (VOA) Residential Re-Entry Center (VOAC-RRC), located at 5000 E. Monument Street, Baltimore, MD 21205. On September 20, 2017, the DC Corrections Information Council (CIC) conducted a comprehensive inspection of the facility. Prior to, and again at the facility, the CIC requested a number of documents from the BOP and the facility in order to gain additional information for its report. During the course of tour and through on-site requests to the Senior Program Director, the CIC was able to collect the following documents:

- A. *General Resident Data*
  - a. Roster of Residents.
- B. *Institutional Supplements*
  - a. Residential Re-Entry Resource Guide;
  - b. Sample Grievance Form; and
  - c. Emergency Itinerary Form.
- C. *Additional Information*
  - a. Spring-Summer Week 1 & 2 Menus.
- D. *Resident Admission and Orientation Handbook*
  - a. Residential Re-Entry Center Inmate Handbook.
- E. *Additional Documents Collected, Not Originally Requested*
  - a. Resident Services Deadlines and Time Frames Chart;
  - b. Sample Resident Weekly Schedule;
  - c. Sample Group Programming Attendance Sheet;
  - d. Sample Home Confinement Weekly Schedule;
  - e. Sample Resident Visitation List;
  - f. Sample Maintenance Request Form;
  - g. Residential Re-Entry Center Fact Sheet;
  - h. Residential Re-Entry Center Internship Program Overview;
  - i. Residential Re-Entry Center Program Overview; and
  - j. Residential Re-Entry Center Brochure.

On September 20, the inspection itself included discussions with the Senior Program Director, one employment specialist, two case managers, and one accountability specialist. CIC was taken on a tour of the facility by the Director. The areas visited included, the visitation room (ground floor), classroom (upper level), computer room (upper level), activity room (upper level), dining room (upper level), kitchen (upper level), women's living area (upper level), and the men's living area (upper level). After the inspection tour, the CIC conducted a review of the Operations Manual and the Employee Handbook. The CIC took notes, but was not able to make copies of the Manual or Handbook.

Finally, the CIC offered to conduct confidential interviews with any VOAC-RRC resident who was sentenced in DC. On September 20, the CIC interviewed ten such residents. Following the inspection, CIC staff members have remained in contact with VOAC-RRC residents who provided additional information regarding their experiences. The CIC highlighted comments and concerns raised by residents throughout this report, and focused on resident concerns in formulating report recommendations.



U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Prisons

Washington, DC 20534

**OCT 24 2018**

Michelle R. Bonner, Esq. Executive Director  
DC Corrections Information Council  
2901 14th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Ms. Bonner,

This letter is in response to the draft inspection report received on August 20, 2018, regarding the September 20, 2017, visit to a Bureau of Prisons privately contracted Residential Reentry Center (a.k.a. Halfway House), Volunteers of America Chesapeake. The Bureau of Prisons (BOP) recognizes the value of the Corrections Information Council (CIC) inspections of its contract facilities and the voice it provides the D.C. Superior Court inmates. We hope to continue working closely to improve the contracts and raise awareness with regard to those inmates' needs. I offer the following response to the recommendations in the report:

Recommendations by CIC:

The draft report recommends that the Volunteers of America Chesapeake Residential Reentry Center (VOA-RRC) allow and assist, or connect residents with services that can assist DC residents with obtaining DC photo-identification and DC medical insurance upon release.

Response: The VOA facilitates services and transportation arrangement for DC residents to assist with obtaining photo identification and medical insurance. Residents with identification needs are referred to a number of resources to include the Mayor's Office on Returning Citizens Affairs (MORCA), residents are also referred to Voices for a Second Chance to obtain vouchers for their Birth Certificate or ID. Since Social Security is a universal application, they are



provided passes to apply for their Social Security Card in Maryland. With regard to medical insurance, all medical needs are covered by the BOP while in custody, to include time spent in VOA. The Human Services Office in DC requires residents to apply for health benefits after their release. Therefore, while DC residents are at the VOA RRC they are sent to Health Care Access Maryland (HCAM) or Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) to assist with applying for benefits for their release.

The draft report recommends that the VOAC-RRC review its hearing process, especially when staff reflections are the only evidence considered in making a determination of removal from the VOAC-RRC.

Response: The RRC follows the BOP's, Program Statement 5270.09, Inmate Discipline Policy. The investigation and review process is sent for final review and approval by the Bureau of Prisons Residential Reentry Management (RRM) office and certified by the Disciplinary Hearing Officer (DHO). Final certification does not occur without review and concurrence with a BOP DHO. Residents are not removed from an RRC without BOP review and oversight.

The draft report recommends that the VOAC-RRC evaluate the sexual offender group and mental health service providers designated to provide required treatment to residents.

Response: While the RRC conducts an individual needs assessment of all residents, it is the BOP who is responsible for sex offender evaluation and treatment. Specifically, the Community Treatment Services (CTS) branch reviews, and makes decisions about treatment. Additionally, CTS contracts and oversees all mental health and sex offender treatment separately from the RRC contract.

The draft report recommends that case managers at the VOAC-RRC be trained to assist residents with their adjustment needs, rather than simply referring residents to programs outside of the VOAC-RRC. Towards this end, the CIC recommends that the VOAC-RRC further educate case managers about services that are available in DC as well as MD.

Response: The contract between the BOP and the RRC requires assessment and discussion of individual needs with each resident. This includes individualized assessment plans and team meetings with a Social Services Coordinator and Case Manager. Based on the results of these meetings and evaluations of need,

the RRC provides either direct assistance or referral to outside resources for assistance. Should there be a need for mental health treatment, the RRC is required to use contracted mental health providers separate from the RRC that are approved and overseen by BOP CTS.

The draft report recommends that the VOAC-RRC amend its travel - or "pass" policy - to allow residents who need to travel in DC to have longer periods of time for which they can be out of the facility, to account for the travel time between Baltimore and DC.

Response: The RRC provides the residents with Metro bus tokens and Amtrak train tickets to travel to DC for programming and treatment. Each resident is required to provide proof of service/documentation upon return to the facility for accountability. The residents are allowed sufficient time to DC. While they are normally not to exceed 12 hours, extensions are routinely granted based on needs with supporting documents.

The draft report recommends that VOAC-RRC have increased contact with CSOSA for a smoother transition to supervised community release in DC.

Response: The RRC case management staff regularly contact CSOSA once a resident arrives at the facility to confirm the resident's assigned probation CSO. RRC staff maintain communication thereafter with the CSO until the resident is released. In addition, RRC staff coordinate with CSOSA to arrange for resident transitional housing if they are homeless prior to their release. CSOSA is also invited to Program Review Team and case review meetings.

The draft report recommends that the VOAC-RRC follow the grievance process that is explained in the Resident Handbook - including reading written submissions, meeting with residents in the required time frame, and answering residents in writing.

Response: Residents have a confidential and secured grievance box at the RRC where they can submit any RRC issues they have to the RRC administration. This is above and beyond the BOP's Administrative Remedy Program. All residents have access to send the BOP grievance forms or letters directly to the RRM office or Branch leadership offices. The contact information for all BOP staff overseeing the RRC and community placement is on display on the bulletin board at the RRC. Should a resident desire to write, or call and speak to a BOP representative, the



information on how to do so is available.

I appreciate the opportunity to review and provide comments on your inspection report of RRC VOA Chesapeake. I hope to continue working closely with the CIC to improve the operations of Bureau contracted Residential Reentry Centers and ensure we are meeting the needs of the inmate population.

Please contact me at (202)353-3646, if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "David Brewer", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

David Brewer, Administrator  
Correctional Programs Branch