

# Nebraska Department of Correctional Services

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STRATEGIC PLAN

JULY 2023 – DECEMBER 2024

NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Mission.

DEPT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

## Message from the Director

Take the lead. That is what we as an agency intend to do through the goals set forth in this strategic plan.

Prior to my arrival in April 2023, NDCS had completed multiple focus groups with all levels of team members and was beginning the process of updating the agency's strategic plan. Working with the executive team, we have incorporated that feedback and developed this plan.



The purpose of the strategic plan is to provide a road map for where we need to go and how we will get there. This plan encompasses work started in June of 2023 and will take us through the remainder of 2023 and all of 2024.

The goals in the strategic plan align with our vision of safe prisons, transformed lives and safe communities. They are realized by investing in our resources, taking ownership of the things we do best, and leading by example.

At the end of this year and next, we will report out on our progress and the milestones we have completed toward the goals. We look forward to working with the committed team at NDCS to accomplish much throughout this 18-month period.

Rob Jeffreys  
NDCS Director

## Executive Summary



The work of NDCS is identified by four separate, but overlapping, categories: **People, Programs, Policies** and **Physical Plant**. Known as the “4 Ps,” they provide the framework for our strategic planning efforts. Through developing our **People**, following sound correctional **Policies**, and investing in our **Physical Plants**, we provide **Program** opportunities for our population to develop the tools and skills to successfully reenter their communities. It’s how we **keep people safe**.

This strategic plan highlights 20 of the agency’s goals. At the end of the year, the agency will provide an update on progress toward the goals.



Our greatest resources are the NDCS team members who have committed to serve the public and keep people safe. By prioritizing team members and investing in their growth, we cultivate a work environment where every person feels respected and appreciated, and believes his or her opinion matters. An investment in our team members is necessary to achieve the vision of safe prisons, transformed lives and safe communities.

## **1. Improve quality of teammate training in line with best practices in corrections and adult learning styles**

Strategy 1: Review available correctional crisis intervention/conflict resolution training opportunities

Strategy 2: Improve pre-service and in-service training experience

Strategy 3: Facilitate additional leadership development opportunities for agency team members

Strategy 4: Increase staff participation in continuous improvement efforts

## **2. Create and maintain a robust wellness program for team members**

Strategy 1: Develop/launch agency wellness program

Strategy 2: Redefine strategies to reduce workplace injuries

Strategy 3: Promote work-life balance through proper roster management

## **3. Review and implement needed changes to the agency's organizational structure**

Strategy 1: Identify and implement an agency succession plan for facility and agency leadership positions

Strategy 2: Improve operational efficiencies through updates and reforms to NDCS business practices

Strategy 3: Revamp post orders to provide user-friendly guidance for expectations of each post and ensure each is reviewed annually

Strategy 4: Conduct systematic review of each division to ensure best practices and best utilization of existing resources

## **4. Increase the one-year teammate retention rate**

Strategy 1: Increase number of teammates who have participated in StrengthsFinder and Strengths Coaching

Strategy 2: Review and enhance recruitment efforts to attract and identify potential team members

Strategy 3: Reduce mandatory overtime

Strategy 4: Increase staff wellness to include family members

Strategy 5: Create mentoring program for first-year teammates

## **5. Foster team member growth and celebrate accomplishments**

Strategy 1: Grow community mentoring through Department of Administrative Services

Strategy 2: Increase LinkedIn Learning course utilization

Strategy 3: Continue engagement efforts

Strategy 4: Increase number of non-required training hours and job shadows completed by team members



More than 90% of the individuals incarcerated in Nebraska prisons will return to the community at some point. With an average sentence length of three years, it is imperative reentry begins at intake and opportunities for change are available throughout a person's incarceration. A program-rich environment provides the space for individuals to make the necessary changes for successful reentry.

## **1. Ensure individuals are ready at their earliest possible release date**

Strategy 1: Explore other work release opportunities

Strategy 2: Evaluate and revise reentry practices to be more user-friendly

## **2. Review and revise population management practices to align with an incentive-based corrections system**

Strategy 1: Separate the incarcerated population by custody level

Strategy 2: Implement incentive-based opportunities at each custody level

Strategy 3: Decrease violent behavior perpetrated by incarcerated individuals

Strategy 4: Develop non-restrictive housing options for high-risk/violent incarcerated individuals

## **3. Increase the availability of and engagement in clinical treatment**

Strategy 1: Review and implement suggested improvements from program evaluations

Strategy 2: Monitor clinical program delivery to ensure completion prior to parole eligibility date

Strategy 3: Complete behavioral health staffing analysis

Strategy 4: Increase mental health services

## **4. Increase the availability of and engagement in non-clinical programs**

Strategy 1: Utilize Pell Grants to the fullest extent

Strategy 2: Identify incentives for program participation

Strategy 3: Increase case manager program facilitation

Strategy 4: Increase utilization of peer facilitators

Strategy 5: Develop and enhance evidence-based/research-based programs and cognitive behavioral interventions for incarcerated individuals

Strategy 6: Increase the availability of and engagement in domestic violence programming

## **5. Prioritize reentry from intake to release**

Strategy 1: Provide reentry-focused case management services

Strategy 2: Implement the Nebraska 5-Keys to Wellbeing Development

Strategy 3: Establish reentry academies

Strategy 4: Analyze parole decisions to identify and implement strategies to increase favorable parole decisions

Strategy 5: Evaluate reentry preparation and identify opportunities to improve services

Strategy 6: Revise reentry plan to be more reentrant friendly

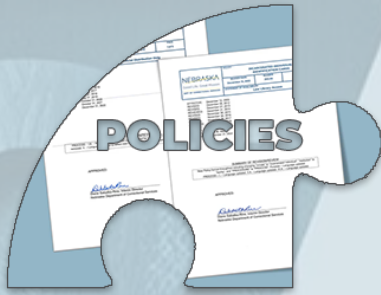


## **6. Maintain healthcare services and provision in line with community standard of care**

- [Strategy 1:](#) Fully implement an electronic health records system
- [Strategy 2:](#) Increase healthcare services provided within facilities rather than utilizing community providers
- [Strategy 3:](#) Complete intake medical screenings within seven days
- [Strategy 4:](#) Ensure timely filling of prescriptions
- [Strategy 5:](#) Ensure timely delivery of dental services
- [Strategy 6:](#) Ensure timely delivery of eye care services
- [Strategy 7:](#) Establish and maintain robust quality control process
- [Strategy 8:](#) Track and complete wellness/chronic/preventative care examinations
- [Strategy 9:](#) Receive Medicaid reimbursement consistent with established regulations
- [Strategy 10:](#) Develop treatment plan/policy for incarcerated individuals with opioid addiction/withdrawal
- [Strategy 11:](#) Ensure nutritionally balanced meals

## **7. Provide mental health care that is individualized to need**

- [Strategy 1:](#) Enhance quality and availability of behavioral health services
- [Strategy 2:](#) Revise crisis level of care aimed to improve therapeutic outcomes and to improve conditions of confinement
- [Strategy 3:](#) Update and review all mental health policies



Sound correctional policies enable NDCS to fulfill our mission to keep people safe. Policies based on best practices and national correctional standards ensure operational safety and security and effective prison management. This includes input from all stakeholders, including the public.

## 1. Increase community engagement through the establishment of formal feedback processes and opportunities

Strategy 1: Create a constituent services division

Strategy 2: Create correctional advisory councils with members of the public and formerly incarcerated individuals

Strategy 3: Increase involvement in existing community groups

Strategy 4: Create a platform for formerly incarcerated individuals to share feedback

## 2. Improve the safety of prisons for teammates and incarcerated individuals

Strategy 1: Review and revise prison management practices to increase safety

Strategy 2: Increase emphasis on basic security practices

Strategy 3: Decrease contraband in secure facilities

Strategy 4: Decrease use of force incidents

Strategy 5: Redefine Intelligence and Investigation division

Strategy 6: Improve technology to enable team members to complete tasks efficiently, communicate effectively and enhance the safety and security of facilities

Strategy 7: Issue stab-resistant vests to protective services team members (LB50)

Strategy 8: Revamp post orders to provide user-friendly expectations of each post

Strategy 9: Review available correctional crisis intervention/conflict resolution training opportunities, to include specialized training for individuals with a serious mental illness, to enhance and/or replace current training

## 3. Maintain integrity of all NDCS practices

Strategy 1: Promulgate rules and regulations as necessary

Strategy 2: Review inmate grievance process to identify and implement improvements

Strategy 3: Review misconduct report appeal process to identify and implement improvements

Strategy 4: Review agency policies and reports to identify and implement improvements

Strategy 5: Review tort claim processes to ensure claims are handled in the most appropriate and expedient manner possible

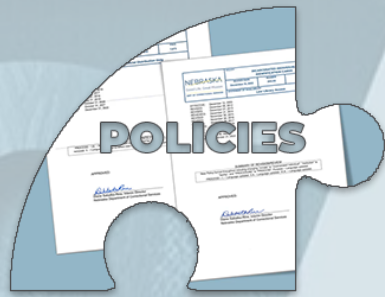
Strategy 6: Review employee grievance process to ensure filed grievances are handled in the most appropriate and expedient manner possible

Strategy 7: Ensure that employee claims filed with the Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission are investigated and processed in a timely manner

Strategy 8: Ensure that lawsuits filed against the agency are handled in a timely and legally sound manner

Strategy 9: Review the process for public record requests, to ensure responses are provided in a timely manner and comport to requirements outlined in statute

Strategy 10: Review processes associated with accommodation requests under the Americans with Disabilities Act to increase timeliness of responses



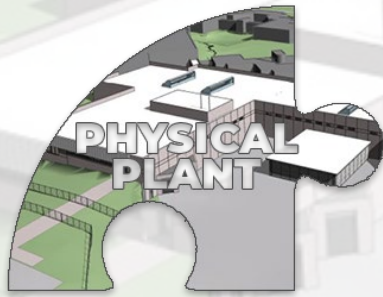
#### 4. Enhance formal partnerships with other state offices and national organizations to improve the outcomes of the criminal justice system

Strategy 1: Establish/enhance meaningful partnerships with:

- a. Crime Commission
- b. Court and Probation
- c. Nebraska Emergency Management Agency
- d. Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
- e. Nebraska State Patrol
- f. Nebraska Board of Parole/Parole Supervision
- g. Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles
- h. Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs
- i. Nebraska Department of Transportation

Strategy 2: Increase workforce pathway opportunities with the Nebraska Department of Labor

Strategy 3: Expand the agency's research network



Physical space and security measures are key to achieving the agency's mission. The Nebraska Legislature funded a new 1,512-bed multi-custody level facility which will be a significant focus for the agency. NDCS continues efforts to increase the useful life of current facilities through ongoing preventative maintenance and construction.

## **1. Complete the capital construction projects that are approved by the legislature**

Strategy 1: Construct 96-bed unit for special needs populations at the Reception and Treatment Center

Strategy 2: Design and construct a 1,512-bed Nebraska State Penitentiary replacement facility

Strategy 3: Design and construct phase one of the agency-wide fire alarm replacement project.

Strategy 4: Continue various maintenance projects including the agency-wide camera replacement

## **2. Continue to upgrade and innovate facility infrastructure**

Strategy 1: Continue projects that improve energy conservation

Strategy 2: Continue to work with outside agencies that assist with energy conservation projects

Strategy 3: Investigate new ideas/technologies to make the physical plant work better for staff and incarcerated individuals

## **3. Maintain structural and operational integrity of facility physical plants**

Strategy 1: Continue the use of the electronic work order system to track lifespan of aging equipment

Strategy 2: Increase training for maintenance staff that relates to their trade or work assignment

Strategy 3: Decrease the reliance on outside contractors, when possible

## **4. Maintain sanitation in compliance with agency policy and health codes**

Strategy 1: Build on current staff training to better understand the requirements for proper safety and sanitation in facilities

Strategy 2: Decrease the reliance on outside contractors, when possible



