

NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Mission.

DEPT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

# Strategic Plan Progress Report

## Fiscal Year 2016 - 2017



# Corrections Transformation Highlights Timeline



# Table of Contents

- Corrections Transformation Highlights Timeline .....2
- A Message from Director Scott R. Frakes .....4
- Executive Summary .....4
- Our NDCS Team .....5
- Mission, Vision, Values .....6
- Our Strategic Plan .....7
- Culture of Reentry and Rehabilitation ..... 8-9
  - OUTCOME: Needs are Addressed .....8
  - OUTCOME: Reentry Focused .....8
  - OUTCOME: Plan Starts at Reception.....8
  - Thinking for a Change .....9
  - Substance Abuse Services .....9
  - Moral Reconciliation Therapy .....9
- Collaborative Community Relationships ..... 10-11
  - OUTCOME: Community-Focused Corrections ..... 10
  - OUTCOME: Staff as Volunteers ..... 10
  - OUTCOME: A Criminal Justice System ..... 10
  - Defy Ventures ..... 11
  - Christian Heritage..... 11
- One Team – One Vision..... 12-13
  - OUTCOME: Safe Teammates..... 12
  - OUTCOME: Engaged Teammates..... 12
  - Correctional Employees Week..... 12
  - OUTCOME: Retaining Teammates ..... 13
  - Torch Run ..... 13
  - Annual Awards Ceremony..... 13
  - Leadership Academy..... 13
- Transforming Corrections ..... 14-15
  - OUTCOME: Data-Guided Approaches Justice ..... 14
  - OUTCOME: Justice Reinvestment Data ..... 14
  - Veterans Service Group ..... 14-15
  - OUTCOME: Mission-Specific Housing ..... 14
  - Restrictive Housing ..... 15
  - STRONG-R..... 15
- Transparent and Accountable ..... 16-17
  - OUTCOME: Externally Measured ..... 16
  - OUTCOME: Balanced Budget..... 16
  - OUTCOME: Publicly Accessible..... 17
  - Collaboration with State Auditor ..... 17
  - Process Improvement..... 17
- Capital Construction..... 18-19
- A Look Ahead to FY 2018 ..... 19



## A Message from Director Scott R. Frakes



Over the last two and a half years, our team at the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) has demonstrated an unparalleled commitment to charting a new

course for the agency. From developing new sentence calculation software to innovative programming and housing, this team has taken a solution-minded approach to addressing diverse challenges.

As one of Nebraska's largest state agencies, taxpayers have placed a great and increasing trust in our agency over

the last two and half years. That trust is held by a talented team and reinforced by regulatory agencies, state and federal auditors, the Office of Public Counsel, advocacy groups and the media who all play a role in the work of our team.

More than nine out of 10 people of the 5,300 incarcerated men and women in our facilities will return to our communities. Creating a smooth transition from prison to community is foundational to successful reentry and protecting public safety.

Our more than 2,000 team members work together on a daily basis to fulfill our mission of "Keep people safe."

We continue to work as a team to move the agency forward and we are measuring our progress. The results highlighted in the following pages are based on our 2015 – 2018 strategic plan, which serves as a framework for our initiatives.

The plan identifies the agency's goals and speaks to our priorities: creating a culture of reentry and rehabilitation; developing collaborative community relationships; working as one team with one vision; transforming corrections and the way we do business; and being transparent and accountable to the taxpayers of Nebraska.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about the work of NDCS. Our team is truly honored to serve the State of Nebraska.

## Executive Summary

In FY 2017, NDCS team members accomplished much to be proud of and identified solutions to address new and ongoing challenges. Some of the initiatives you will read about in the coming pages include:

### Capital Investments:

We are currently constructing over \$100 million in new facilities thanks to new investments from the Governor and Legislature.

### Expanded Programming:

Our team delivers innovative programming to nearly 1,500 incarcerated individuals, at any given time, to prepare them for reentry.

### Improved Security:

New security measures have been implemented to keep our facilities up-to-date and support our team members in their place of work.

### Mission-Specific Housing:

We continue to expand mission-specific housing to better prepare inmates for their return to the community.

### Data-Driven Decisions:

NDCS completed more than 7,000 risk assessments of the individuals in our facilities for the first time to help us determine programming and housing needs.

## Our NDCS Team



The NDCS team members are a diverse collection of people committed to providing the highest level of services to the citizens of Nebraska. They come from a wide variety of backgrounds including military, law enforcement, healthcare, social services and the private sector.

## 2,400 POSITIONS



The categories above represent some of the 200 plus job classifications for the 2,400 positions within NDCS. Each team member provides services essential to the NDCS mission: 'Keep people safe.'



## Mission

“Keep people safe” is not a simple mission. We keep people in the public safe. We keep people we work with safe. We keep people who visit our prisons safe. We keep people who are incarcerated safe.

We keep people safe through sound incarceration practices and daily vigilance. We know that good security encompasses counts, searches and locked doors, but it is more than that. We also provide people with opportunities to change. Assessments, treatment, programming and healthy environments are all part of how we keep people safe.

“Keep people safe” is a huge responsibility. One we cannot take for granted. One we accomplish with pride.

## Vision

### Safe Prisons – Transformed Lives – Safe Communities

Our vision describes what we want to create, where we want to be, our end-state. Successfully carrying out our mission is how we achieve this vision. The vision of our agency is a direct reflection of how important we are to an orderly society.

Through the use of effective interventions, incentives and appropriate sanctions, we make prisons safe. By creating safe environments where people can engage in pro-social activities and address needs that reduce their risk to reoffend, their lives will be transformed. When people become contributing members of society, our communities are safe.

## Values

### Integrity –

We take ownership of our actions and demonstrate professionalism, honesty and commitment.

It is how we behave when no one is looking. It is going the extra mile even though we know there will be no special reward or recognition. It is having a strong moral compass and refusing to stray from our beliefs. It is having so much respect for ourselves that we are not willing to behave in any other way. We are in the business of changing behavior, and we must model what we expect from others.

### Respect –

We believe every person has fundamental worth and we demonstrate this in our words and actions.

It is often said that respect is not given until it is earned. At NDCS, however, we begin with the expectation that every person deserves to be shown respect in all circumstances. We respect our co-workers, we respect the public and we respect the people housed in our prisons – no matter how they behave toward us. By modeling respectful behavior at all times, we will change the behavior of

those around us.

### Compassion –

We care about people. We have empathy for others and treat everyone with respect and dignity.

We struggle with the word compassion in corrections work. It is often interpreted to mean weakness or putting staff at risk of manipulation. Caring does not equate to weakness. Our interactions with each other and the people we care for must always be within professional boundaries. To achieve our mission and vision, we must care about people.

### Growth –

We believe everyone has the capacity to reach greater potential. We strive to provide the right environment, expectations and opportunities for development.

Human development centers on expanding people’s capabilities to lead lives they value. The field of corrections is evolving at an ever-quickening pace. As professionals, we must continue to acquire new knowledge and skills related to our work. To break the cycle of recidivism, people who are incarcerated must change their thinking and behavior. We provide the setting, the tools and the

opportunities for people to grow.

### Excellence –

We seek continuous improvement and innovation in every endeavor to achieve the best outcomes.

We aspire to be the best in the business of corrections. The status quo is yesterday’s performance goal. We seek excellence when we set new goals and challenge each other to accomplish the things we thought we could not do. We learn from every experience to improve the work we do. Quality, commitment, learning – these are cornerstones of excellence.

## Our Strategic Plan

The 2015–2018 strategic plan represents a continuation of a transformation that began in 2015. It provides a framework for identifying and implementing new strategies and measuring performance. It identifies the agency’s goals and outcomes to ensure steady and consistent progress.

### Strategic Goals

Five goals have been identified to transform the agency. Each goal includes outcomes with multiple measures to ensure consistency and progress.

#### 1. Culture of Reentry and Rehabilitation

- Needs are Addressed
- Reentry Focused
- Plan Starts at Reception

#### 4. Transforming Corrections

- Data-Guided Approaches
- Justice Reinvestment
- Mission-Specific Housing

#### 2. Collaborative Community Relationships

- Community Corrections Focused
- Staff as Volunteers
- A Criminal Justice System

#### 5. Transparent and Accountable

- Externally Measured
- Balanced Budget
- Publicly Accessible

#### 3. One Team – One Vision

- Safe Teammates
- Engaged Teammates
- Retaining Teammates





## Culture of Reentry

Creating a **Culture of Reentry and Rehabilitation** requires a shift in the way we do business. More than 93 percent of the NDCS population will, at some point, return to our communities. One way NDCS reduces recidivism, prevents future victimization and keeps people safe is to provide individuals with multiple and varied rehabilitation opportunities. This helps them learn how to lead healthier and more responsible lives. We are addressing the needs people have prior to release, becoming reentry focused and beginning planning at the earliest possible time.

### Violence Reduction Program Beds

50 in FY 2017



10 in FY 2016

### OUTCOME: NEEDS ARE ADDRESSED

Addressing needs starts with an effective method of identification. NDCS does this through the use of a risk/needs/responsivity (RNR) assessment tool, called the STRONG-R. During FY 2017, more than 7,000 RNR assessments were administered to 5,560 inmates and parolees.

Individuals who score high risk for violence or sex offenses also require a clinical assessment to determine treatment needs. This fiscal year saw a 26 percent improvement in the time from admission to screening, which ensures needs are addressed in a timely fashion.

Addressing the needs requires the availability of programming. During FY 2017, behavioral health team members increased capacity to provide the state-of-the-art Violence Reduction Program (VRP). This program is designed to address violent behavior in individuals with the highest needs.

### Incarcerated Vocational and Life Skills Participants

1,983 in FY 2017

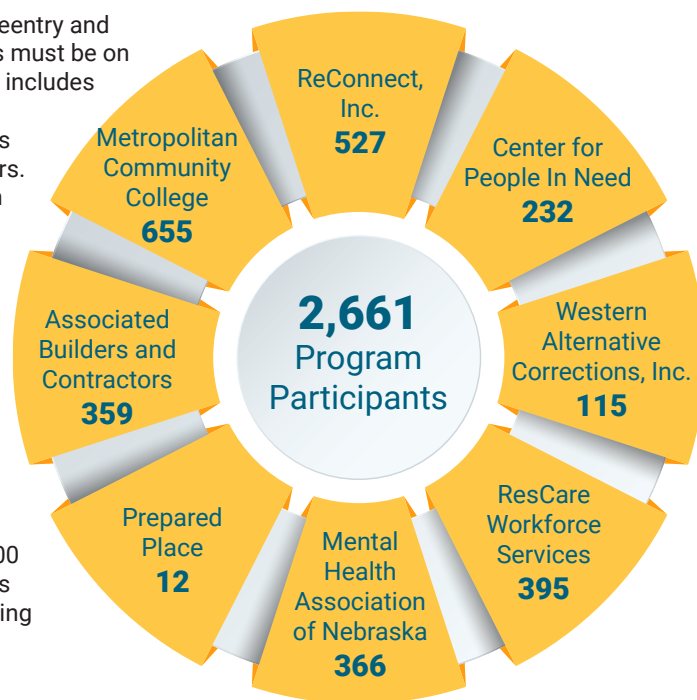


1,161 in FY 2016

### OUTCOME: REENTRY FOCUSED

To create a culture of reentry and rehabilitation our focus must be on reentry. The word "our" includes NDCS team members, incarcerated individuals and community partners. Shifting the focus from the crime and the time to what happens after incarceration is key.

The Vocational and Life Skills (VLS) program is one way to create that reentry focus by offering multiple program opportunities inside NDCS facilities. In FY 2017, almost 2,000 incarcerated individuals started VLS programming prior to release.



### OUTCOME: PLAN STARTS AT RECEPTION

The intake process and the first few months in prison are a big adjustment. Within the first three weeks of admission, the individual is invited to attend a reentry orientation session designed to shift the individual's focus away from his/her incarceration toward the opportunity he/she has to build a better life.

Participation in reentry programs is not mandatory. The goal is for at least 75 percent of new admissions to attend a reentry orientation planning session within 30 days of admission.

## and Rehabilitation

### Thinking For A Change (T4C) Aims to Reduce Criminal Thinking



Two T4C students at LCC work through a problem together.

During the spring and summer of 2017, NDCS introduced a new cognitive program. Thinking for a Change (T4C) is an evidence-based, cognitive behavioral change program. It incorporates research from cognitive restructuring theory, social skills development and the learning and use of problem-solving skills. It aims to reduce criminal

thinking. T4C is a core risk-reducing program and evidence indicates dramatic results in inmate behavior, seen in a reduction of recidivism and lowered institutional misconduct.

It is offered in nine NDCS facilities and is facilitated by a variety of non-clinical staff members, including unit case managers. One of the reasons this program is so impactful is the role playing that occurs in class allowing individuals to practice problem-solving skills and learn active listening skills. One facilitator said, "It teaches people how to think instead of what to think."

### Substance Abuse Services

NDCS operates three adult male and one adult female residential substance use programs, with program duration of approximately six months. They are available at NSP, TSCI, OCC and NCCW. The six month residential programs for inmates consist of three phases and are dually focused on a Substance Abuse/Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)-based substance use education, recovery, and relapse prevention treatment in conjunction with an additional emphasis on criminal thinking/choices/behavior patterns.

The residential programs rely on the concrete, rather than the abstract, in working with substance abuse inmates. Women's programs also provide a gender-specific component for dealing with the issues surrounding female substance use as well as addressing criminal thinking/choices/behavior patterns. In FY 2017, **453 individuals successfully completed residential treatment.**

Non-residential treatment services (NRTS) are provided at the Work Ethic Camp, the community corrections centers and/or to individuals on parole. The NRTS programs address the needs of individuals who meet the requirements and criteria for a less intense level of care or, due to other circumstances such as a limited sentence structure, are not eligible for residential treatment services. NRTS programming consists of two levels: intensive outpatient (IOP), and outpatient (OP). FY 2017 saw **638 successful completions of NRTS.**

### Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) Helps Offenders Change Behavior



Photo by Kayla Wolf/Lincoln Journal Star. Frank Ladig talks about his goals to be an urban farmer and provide food for people during a moral reconciliation therapy class at NSP.

Excerpt from Lincoln Journal Star/JoAnne Young

Moral reconciliation therapy. It's a strange-sounding way of describing the act of changing your way of decision-making and behavior.

To scores of men and women in Nebraska prisons, it's become a 12-step pathway to increasing moral reasoning, enhancing self image, promoting a positive identity and potentially reducing returns to prisons.

It allows them to reach above lying, cheating, stealing, betraying, blaming others, victimizing and damaging relationships.

They are reading and talking and writing their way to grace, placing more value on human life, justice, dignity and freedom.

Michelle Duryea, 50, was on Step 2 one evening at the Nebraska Correctional Center for Women in York, working on trusting that there was a part of her that wanted to do better, that she could be honest with herself and trust herself and the program.

Teacher Diane Brune led her class of 13 women at the prison, helping them take accountability for their actions, and to take control of their lives.

At the Nebraska State Penitentiary, Amber Drake was working with a group of four men on a Tuesday afternoon.

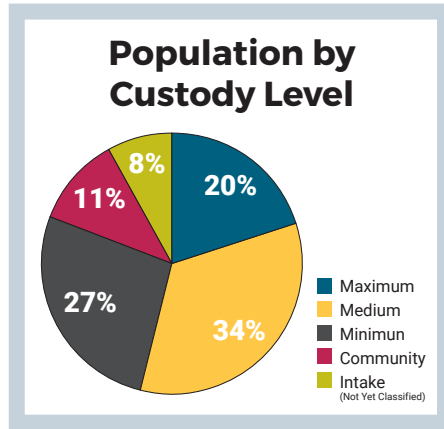
"It really digs in to who you are," Drake said. "And so it kind of starts pulling apart those layers."

Visit the Lincoln Journal Star's [website](#) to read the full story.



## Collaborative

**Collaborative community relationships** are critical to the success of the work we do. The work that must be accomplished during incarceration is significant and cannot be completed without community involvement. Outcomes addressed in the strategic plan include community corrections-focused, staff as volunteers and a criminal justice system.



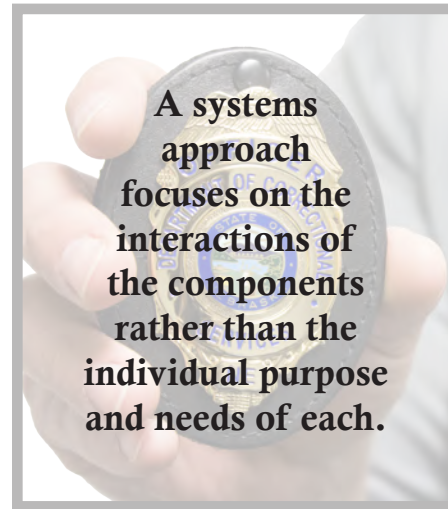
Four WEC teammates volunteered with Project Impact on May 6, cleaning up a yard and tearing down a broken fence for a single mother and her two children. The group hauled away three trailers and one pickup load of yard debris and garbage.

### OUTCOME: COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS-FOCUSED

Community corrections encompasses work release, parole and post-release supervision. The 'least-restrictive environment' is critical for preparing individuals to leave prison and return to the community. In FY 2017, the work began to develop a new classification instrument to assess custody/security level of inmates. This, in concert with the STRONG-R, ensures individuals are placed in the least restrictive environment while meeting their programming needs.

The Governor and Legislature funded \$28.5 million in community custody beds over the last two years. These construction projects are a direct reflection of the efforts to move individuals through the classification system and into work release programs.

Providing the opportunity to gain employment experience and do so within the supportive environment of community corrections centers, leads to a greater likelihood of employment success post-incarceration.



### OUTCOME: A CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Before Justice Reinvestment there was minimal collaboration between entities of the criminal justice system. In fact, it was hard to characterize it as a 'system.'

In November 2016, NDCS hosted the first of the "Seamless System of Criminal Justice" meetings. This meeting brought together more than 45 team members from all levels of Probation, Parole and NDCS. They continue to meet quarterly to share information and services, discuss risk/needs and evidence-based practices and to identify solutions to challenges.

Each agency serves different functions within the criminal justice system. Taking time to learn from each other helps everyone work better together. NDCS is able to better prepare individuals for release on parole or post-release supervision when we understand the 'what' and the 'why' of the other agencies.

### OUTCOME: STAFF AS VOLUNTEERS

Active involvement by NDCS team members in providing meaningful programming is necessary to positively impact community safety and reentry. Teammates, from corrections corporals to wardens, deliver programming in addition to their regular duties. Often these teammates have the opportunity to change their own perspectives and to influence individuals in a more direct way.

NDCS teammates are mission-driven and are committed members of their communities as well. They take public service to heart and take advantage of opportunities to serve people in the community, individually and as a group.

## Community Relationships



A volunteer with Compassion in Action Inc, hands out high-fives during Defy Ventures kick-off event at the Tecumseh State Correctional Institution.

### Defy Ventures Inspires Hope

Defy Ventures is a privately-funded nonprofit organization that aims to transform the lives of individuals with criminal records by hosting entrepreneurship, employment and character development training programs. Defy currently operates its program, "CEO of Your New Life," in the Nebraska State Penitentiary, the Omaha Correctional Center and the Tecumseh State Correctional Institution.

Defy founder and CEO Catherine Hoke said, "[Director] Frakes — along with the prison system's wardens — are hungry for programming and open to new ways to improve results. His willingness to test

out new ideas is one of the reasons Defy has seen so much success in Nebraska prisons."

Hoke stresses the importance of second chances and having confidence in oneself. Nationally, Defy graduates have a 3.2 percent recidivism rate and a 95 percent employment rate. The organization has financed and incubated more than 100 startups founded by its graduates.

"Defy does not work with criminals," Hoke said. "We work with people who have had criminal histories in their past and that's a very big difference. Today we take ownership of our past while we transform our future."

**Volunteers provide pro-social activities for incarcerated men and women that wouldn't be possible without them. Whether they are organizations, individuals, NDCS team members or other state agencies, community partners play a critical role in successful reentry.**

### Christian Heritage Fosters Family Relationships



Photo courtesy of Christian Heritage

Christian Heritage is a nonprofit agency with a mission for children and families. Years ago, they recognized the impact of incarceration on children as most incarcerated women and many incarcerated men are parents. Much of their focus is on fathers and breaking the cycle of generational incarceration.

They provide 'Inside Out Dads', 'Within My Reach' and 'Common Sense Parenting' classes. When the first class is completed, fathers are allowed "Daddy Day Visits."

The second class focuses on the partner relationship and how to respect the children's mothers. The third class is focused specifically on parenting skills.

They also provide a family advocacy program in the community for families of incarcerated parents. Recently, Christian Heritage began hosting Father – Daughter dances in NDCS facilities and have Father – Son events on the horizon.

The events have been powerful for both the daughters and the fathers. The programs benefit the fathers, but are focused on the children. The three goals of the programs are to keep the kids 1) at home; 2) in school; and 3) out of trouble.



## One Team –



NDCS team members at the Nebraska Correctional Center for Women (NCCW) enjoy a luncheon in celebration of Correctional Officers and Employees Week.

### Correctional Officers and Employees Week

In recognition of the work of NDCS teammates and the vital contribution we make to public safety in Nebraska, Governor Ricketts proclaimed May 7-13, 2017, as Correctional Officers and Employees Week. It is a special time of year when teammates recognize each other for the hard work and dedication that, truly, only we can understand. And, it is a time to celebrate the good work we do.

In 1984, President Ronald Reagan issued the first proclamation for Correctional Officers Week and said the following:

*"Historically, correctional officers have been viewed as 'guards,' occupying isolated and misunderstood positions in prisons and jails. In recent years, the duties of these officers have become increasingly complex and demanding. They are called upon to fill, simultaneously, custodial, supervisory and counseling roles. The professionalism, dedication and courage exhibited by these officers throughout the performance of these demanding and often conflicting roles deserve our utmost respect. The important work of correctional officers often does not receive the recognition from the public it deserves. It is appropriate that we honor the many contributions and accomplishments of these men and women who are a vital component of the field of corrections."*

His words remain true today. NDCS teammates continue to demonstrate professionalism, dedication and courage in demanding roles. The quality of work, the amount of work and the commitment our teammates bring to the work is impressive.

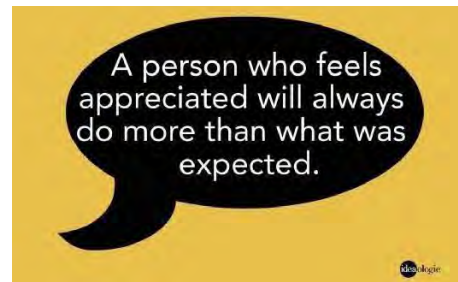
**One Team – One Vision** speaks to unity, focus and commitment. It captures the idea that every single teammate within our agency has a role in the success of NDCS. We are bound by our common mission to keep people safe. We become one team with one vision when teammates are safe and engaged, which leads to increased retention.

### OUTCOME: SAFE TEAMMATES

Our mission to keep people safe starts with our staff and our commitment to staff safety has never been stronger. Like traditional law enforcement in our communities, corrections officers work to protect public safety inside NDCS facilities. NDCS works every day to give team members the training and resources they need to fulfill our mission. Even as we provide evidence-based programming, a segment of the population will continue to present challenges. Staff assaults range from throwing substances to physical assault with no or non-serious injury to physical assault with serious injury. Zero is the only acceptable number of staff assaults; however, placing a person in prison does not eliminate the risk they will commit a new offense. NDCS team members employ an increasing variety of strategies to keep themselves, inmates and the public safe:

- **Searches** – Housing units, cells, common areas, kitchen workers and industries workers
- **Equipment** – earbuds for radios, body cameras and Tasers
- **Weapons** – addition of less lethal weapons to towers for crowd control
- **Resiliency training** – Corrections Fatigue to Fulfillment (CF2F) training
- **Emergency preparedness** – increase frequency of drills
- **Supervisory sergeants** – addition of positions to help line staff and supervisors
- **Communication** – dialogue sessions and 'town hall' meetings with Director Frakes and all levels of staff to discuss staff safety
- **Email** – provided email to all staff to increase information awareness
- **Awareness** – posted signs in housing units to increase awareness that it is a felony to assault an NDCS staff member
- **Visibility** – increased management visibility
- **Leadership training** – designed and implemented the Leadership Academy for mid-managers

### OUTCOME: ENGAGED TEAMMATES



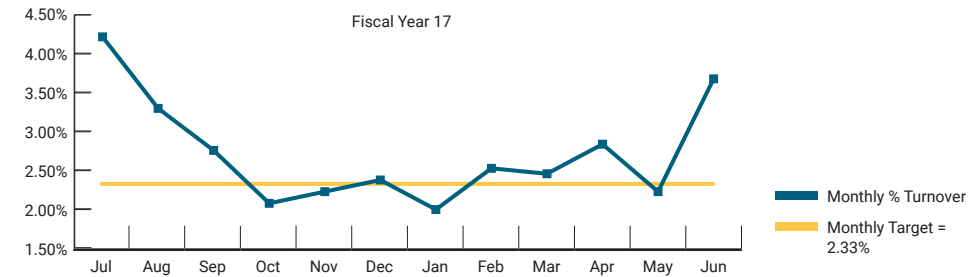
Employee engagement is key to retention and is not an exact science. It involves varied efforts to create a culture and conditions in which each teammate is able to contribute his/her best work and is committed to the agency's mission. The key to engagement is that the individual feels his/her own well-being is enhanced through the experience of work.

Often it is noted that people stay with a

job when they have a positive relationship with their supervisors. NDCS places a priority on enhancing leadership skills of mid-managers, knowing it impacts teammates at all levels. When supervisors have better tools, they are able to create positive connections with their teammates.

Corrections is difficult work and knowing there is someone "on your side" can make all the difference. This year, the agency put a renewed focus on staff advocacy. The new SERVES team (Staff Empowerment & Resiliency/Victim Education & Support) is available to provide peer support in the event of a staff assault, critical incident or other employee need. This team is developing family-support functions to engage family members and educate them on the work their loved one does.

## – One Vision



### OUTCOME: RETAINING TEAMMATES

Efforts to reduce staff turnover were plentiful this year. The agency's full-time recruiter attended job fairs during the year. We introduced "iRecruit," an employee referral incentive program. Through this effort, current team members are monetarily rewarded when they bring in new hires who successfully complete the required pre-service training and original probation. We successfully negotiated raises of up to 4.5 percent for high turnover/high vacancy positions.

The Governor and the Nebraska Legislature allocated \$1.5 million to be utilized for retention during this fiscal year. Many efforts were made with these funds and included:

- Professional development bonus for training
- Resiliency training – Corrections Fatigue to Fulfillment
- Staff wellness center at NSP and TSCI
- Retention bonus to high vacancy, high turnover positions

Employee turnover in corrections tends to be higher due to the nature of the work. People who succeed in corrections have a talent for remaining calm under pressure and for communicating in difficult environments. Couple that with the extremely low unemployment rate and the incredible demand for labor, and it explains the challenges of recruitment and retention.

### Torch Run Fosters Agency-Wide Unity, Generosity



Team members from different NDCS facilities participated in Lincoln's leg of the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics Nebraska on May 17. "This means the world to the athletes involved in Special Olympics," said Jeff Boston, Nebraska State Patrol trooper and director of the run. In total, 34 NDCS team members participated in torch runs in Lincoln, York, Beatrice and McCook.

### NDCS Celebrates Team at Awards Ceremony



The Reentry Unit poses for a portrait after receiving the Outstanding Ambassador award at the 2017 NDCS Employee Awards ceremony.

NDCS honored 24 individual teammates and two special teams during the 2017 Awards and Recognition Ceremony at the Lancaster Extension Education Center on May 25.

NDCS Director Scott Frakes welcomed awardees and their family and friends before introducing keynote speakers Governor Pete Ricketts and Lincoln Police Department Officer Melissa Ripley.

### Leadership Academy Provides Opportunity to Realize Potential

This year marked the implementation of a 40-hour 'Leadership Academy – Supervisor Essentials' developed for mid-managers. This is an opportunity for NDCS to invest in its most valuable resources – its teammates.

This training provides participants the opportunity to learn from and interact with agency leaders in a meaningful way through coaching sessions, role plays, guest lectures and a leadership panel. During the first year, participants also had the opportunity to meet with and learn from Governor Pete Ricketts, Major General Daryl Bohac, Scott Frakes, Kyle Schneweis, Byron Diamond and Kevin Kush.

Leaders begin by completing the Strengths Finder assessment then tie those strengths into various discussions around delegation, collaboration, managing-up, conflict management and teambuilding, just to name a few. Participants identify and build action plans to implement leadership skills to their facilities, staff and/or agency.

The goal for the year was to provide this opportunity to 80 leaders across the agency. This goal was surpassed as 92 staff members graduated from the Leadership Academy in FY 2017.



Jan. 13 marked the first graduation from NDCS' 40-hour leadership academy. Governor Pete Ricketts talked to participants about the need to understand their mission, accountability and the importance of efficiency and effectiveness in all areas of government.



## Transforming

**Transforming Corrections** happens in many ways – from the way we manage the population to the way we provide opportunities for change to the culture of the agency. Over the last two plus years, NDCS has experienced an enormous amount of progress and change, including working with the Council of State Governments, the implementation of the STRONG-R risk/needs/responsivity assessment tool, an increase in mission-specific housing, reforms to restrictive housing and more. In order to transform corrections, we use data to guide our decisions, we participate in Justice Reinvestment, and we offer mission-specific housing opportunities.

### OUTCOME: DATA-GUIDED APPROACHES

Like other government agencies across the nation, NDCS is adopting data-guided decision making. Quite simply, we can no longer afford to address the issues facing our agency without being able to clearly demonstrate the width and breadth of these challenges. We build an organizational system that relies on measurements to both guide our work and demonstrate our outcomes. The agency's research division has expanded and includes a Ph.D.-level administrator, two program analysts and a data manager, which allows us to use our data to analyze, calculate and plan systematically.

### OUTCOME: JUSTICE REINVESTMENT

Since 2014, NDCS has participated in the Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI), a collaborative effort involving all three branches of state government to reform Nebraska's criminal justice system with the goal of reducing the prison population. The JRI process focused on the use of data-driven reforms to manage the criminal justice population more effectively by utilizing prison alternatives when appropriate and reinvesting the savings into evidence-based strategies to increase public safety.

We have developed and/or implemented the following reforms over the last two years as part of JRI:

- The STRONG-R - validated risk/needs/responsivity assessment tool
- Data metrics measuring the impact of JRI
- Reentry process for individuals releasing to post-release supervision
- Justice Program Assessment
- Dashboards for Probation and Parole
- Case Managers Academy
- Collaboration with the Board of Parole to reduce mandatory discharges
- Quality assurance process for NDCS clinical programming
- Restitution rules and regulations
- Transitional housing through JRI grant
- Multiple IT programming changes
- Parole guidelines – developed by Parole, conducted by NDCS
- Expansion of Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT)
- Implementation of Thinking for a Change (T4C)

### Veterans Service Group Promotes Leadership, Camaraderie



Incarcerated individuals in the Nebraska State Penitentiary's Veterans Service Group (VSG) painted murals outlining their military histories on the unit's walls.

The Nebraska State Penitentiary's Veterans Service Group (VSG) can house up to 40 maximum/medium custody individuals from all branches of military service.

Veterans in the unit can participate in any programs available to the general population, along with a number of programs they've started on their own. Vet to Vet is a program that individuals in the VSG created to foster one-on-one communication skills. The Veterans Support and Mentoring program is through a partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs. A veteran-specific Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) class began on June 5, and executives hope to see in-unit

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) programming introduced in the near future.

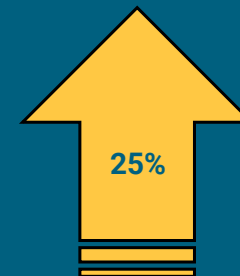
VSG allows privileges that aren't necessarily available in other units, but with those privileges come expectations. Veterans on the unit have assembled their own handbook, which outlines structure, goals and leadership for the group. They vote for a new commander and vice-commander every six months and switch out members on teams for welcoming, communications, learning/education, motivation/entertainment, rituals, rules and more.

*(continued)*

## Corrections

### Mission-Specific Housing Beds

1,195 in FY 2017



951 in FY 2016

### OUTCOME: MISSION-SPECIFIC HOUSING

Mission-specific housing provides a unique opportunity to improve safety by setting expectations for behavior that are enforced by the culture of the unit. Housing people by custody level, demographics, common interest, treatment needs and behavior is an effective method of increasing prison safety and improving the quality of life within a prison. New or expanded housing options include **veterans, faith-based, protective management and the Challenge Program.**

#### Veteran's (continued)

Although staff maintain the final authority, case managers describe the veteran and staff relationship as a partnership. This partnership has led to great improvement in both staff and veteran morale. There have been fewer grievances filed within the unit than any other general population unit, and the veterans in the VSG haven't produced a misconduct report in nearly three months.

"Team members have done an outstanding job with this and I believe the inmate population is appreciative," NSP Warden Robert Madsen said.

### Reform Produces Decrease in Restrictive Housing Daily Population

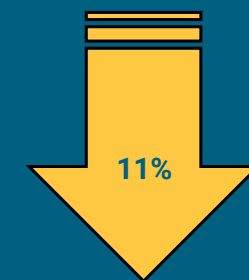
Restrictive housing (RH) is a necessary tool to assess and manage risks to safety and security. Restrictive housing reform began in 2015, but came to life in FY 2017 as NDCS began to implement the promulgated rules and new policy. During this time frame, the average daily population in restrictive housing decreased by 11 percent.

As part of the reform, we began tracking the number of individuals who were evaluated for restrictive housing. Team members were able to find alternative placements that did not require restrictive housing and did not place others at risk.

In FY 2017, there were more than 4,000 incidents which required an assessment of risk and included the potential for restrictive housing placement. Of those, 1,750 were diverted to other less restrictive placements.

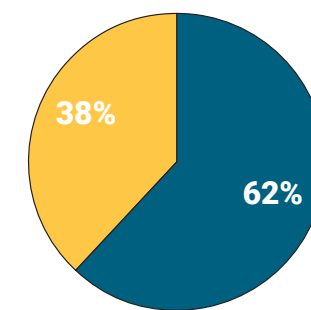
### Average Daily Population in RH

389 in FY 2016



347 in FY 2017

### Risk-Management Decisions



■ Restrictive Housing ■ Alternative Housing

### STRONG-R Identifies and Prioritizes Needs

The STRONG-R is one of many new initiatives NDCS has undertaken. It has taken an enormous effort by unit staff, research and others to implement the plans developed in 2015.

The STRONG-R is a validated risk/needs/responsivity (RNR) tool. It takes into account a variety of information and measures a person's risk to reoffend. It also identifies the needs that, if met, may reduce the risk to reoffend. It recognizes a person's willingness to change and his/her readiness to change. A person can really want to change, but if he/she can't read and write they won't be very responsive to programming that requires reading and journaling. We must meet the needs in a prioritized order to create the environment for change.

We know all 5,300 people do not need the same level of treatment or programming. The person who is high or moderate risk to reoffend will be offered the treatment and/or programming proven to be effective in lowering risk to reoffend. Using research-based approaches to help people succeed is another way we keep people safe.

In FY 2017, we conducted 7,596 assessments on 5,560 incarcerated and paroled individuals. The process to conduct reassessments at prescribed intervals has already begun. Moving forward, we are implementing a quality assurance process to ensure fidelity. We continue to use the information from the STRONG-R to provide individuals with the treatment, resources and planning they need to successfully reenter the community.

The STRONG-R helps us identify exactly what a person needs in order to change his/her thinking and behavior to create a better life and stay out of prison. The work we are doing to incorporate the STRONG-R is important. It is how we keep people safe. It is how we provide the right programming to the right people at the right time.



## Transparent

Being **Transparent and Accountable** is key in maintaining taxpayer trust. NDCS is the second-largest cabinet-level state agency with 2,400 positions and an operating budget of more than \$200 million. As such, it is necessary for the agency to be transparent about how it spends taxpayer dollars and accountable to the taxpayer for those decisions. Modeling accountability for the men and women incarcerated in our facilities is important. To be transparent and accountable, we must be externally measured, balance our budget and be publicly accessible.

### Facility Compliance



### OUTCOME: EXTERNALLY MEASURED

Accountability is achieved through checks and balances conducted by internal and external sources. NDCS is accountable to multiple state and federal requirements and oversight agencies.

The most all-encompassing external evaluation of NDCS is the accreditation by the American Correctional Association (ACA). The ACA utilizes a nationally recognized and accepted audit process for correctional institutions and programs. All facets of facility operations are scrutinized and impacted by this process. Each facility is audited by ACA auditors once every three years. NDCS was one of the first state departments of corrections to receive the prestigious Eagle Award representing that all programs and facilities are accredited. The agency maintains that standing today with all 10 facilities, Central Office and the Staff Training Academy accredited.

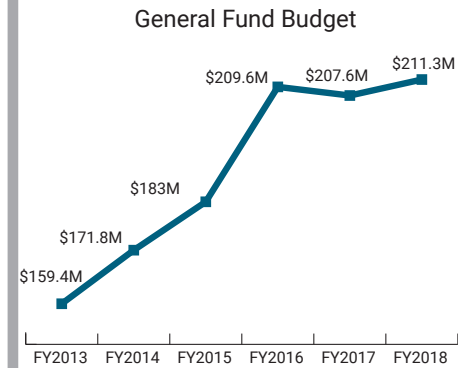
All facilities undergo health inspections and are inspected by the State Fire Marshal.

The federal Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) requires states to meet a set of standards that include providing resources, investigative standards, national reporting and more. NDCS has dedicated staff to ensure this process is meeting the federal requirements set forth. All facilities are audited for compliance.

### External Oversight

- American Correctional Association (ACA)
- Bureau of Justice Assistance – Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA)
- State Fire Marshal
- Auditor of Public Accounts
- Legislature – Office of Public Counsel
- Legislature – Inspector General
- Legislature – Judiciary Committee
- Legislature – Multiple Legislative Resolutions/Committees

### Investment in the Dept. of Correctional Services



### OUTCOME: BALANCED BUDGET

The State of Nebraska balances its budget every year. NDCS must also balance its budget and did so in FY 2017. Being good stewards of the tax dollars allocated to this agency is a priority.

Governor Ricketts and the Nebraska Legislature have invested significantly in NDCS over the last two and a half years to address multiple needs within the agency.

In addition to the General Fund budget, more than \$102 million has been allocated for construction projects that address capacity and infrastructure needs.

## and Accountable

### OUTCOME: PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE

Public accessibility can be difficult in a correctional environment. Still, NDCS is committed to being responsive to the media, families and friends, public officials, advocacy groups and others.

NDCS has made strides in its ability to share information with the public and increased the following of its social media sites, which provide followers with an inside look they would otherwise not have. In FY 2017, work began to redesign the public website with a focus on the needs of the user.

During FY 2017, NDCS shared 95 pieces of information, of which 71 highlighted the work being done by staff members and volunteers to provide opportunities for change. Families and friends are critical to an incarcerated person's ability to manage his/her time well and supportive relationships aid in a smooth and successful transition from prison to the community.

NDCS social media sites provide families and friends a deeper look into the work incarcerated men and women are doing and the positive opportunities they have for change. When families and friends have information about these opportunities, they can encourage participation while they are visiting with their loved one.

### Process Improvement Saves Employee Time and Eliminates Waste

The NDCS process improvement team creates cultural change department-wide by engaging frontline staff in problem solving. They rely heavily on data to fuel their work.

Nearly every NDCS teammate has earned a white belt in Lean Six Sigma – a practice used to improve performance by removing waste, reducing variation and working as a team. After completing their white belt training, teammates can also take a three-hour course to earn their yellow belt.



The process improvement program officially started in October 2016. Since January, it has contributed significantly to cost avoidance and the reallocation of time and resources.

Some of their completions and works-in-progress involve projects related to:

- Security checks
- Clothing issue transfers
- Travel orders
- Prescription drugs
- Leadership Academy
- BCBS contract
- Resiliency training
- Termination process
- NSP phone operator
- Pharmaceutical costs
- Inmate tort claims
- Screening

Department of Correctional Services

## News Release

NEBRASKA  
Good Life. Great Mission.

### NDCS Partners with State Auditor for Process Improvement

July 6, 2017 (Lincoln, Neb.) – The Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) and Nebraska's Auditor of Public Accounts partnered to improve processes within NDCS' accounting division. NDCS had been trying to identify resources with the required expertise to address a backlog in that division. Charlie Janssen, Auditor of Public Accounts, offered to commit his staff's time to provide assistance with this.

As the auditor's office provided the needed assistance, they also conducted an audit of the process. The audit revealed several bookkeeping issues and identified recommendations to address them. No material issues or mishandling of funds were present.

NDCS is working to implement the suggested changes now and will continue to partner with the Auditor's office. Because the specific area of accounting under review is highly specialized and complex, the auditor's office will review our work to see what changes we've made, if the changes have improved the process and identify further solutions as necessary.

"We knew we had a problem and looked for resources to address it. The auditor's office offered to provide their expertise and we are grateful for their assistance," said Director Scott R. Frakes. "Our goal is to improve our processes and this work makes that possible. The partnership between NDCS and the Auditor's office supports the Governor's mission to create a more effective, more efficient and customer-focused state government."

The audit report can be found on the Auditor of Public Accounts [website](#).



Process improvement coordinator Heather Behl leads NDCS team members through a project to improve clothing issue transfers.



## Current Capital Construction Projects



Governor Ricketts and the Nebraska Legislature are investing in capital construction projects that address capacity and infrastructure needs.

The above rendering depicts the facility expansion project at the Community Corrections Center – Lincoln (CCC-L). It provides the opportunity to provide gender-specific care as all women at community custody will be housed in one location. Additionally, it adds programming space and updates kitchen and dining facilities. Below (left) is the 100-bed dormitory built on the CCC-L grounds and (right) is a closer look at the 160-bed female unit.



### 100-Bed Dormitory

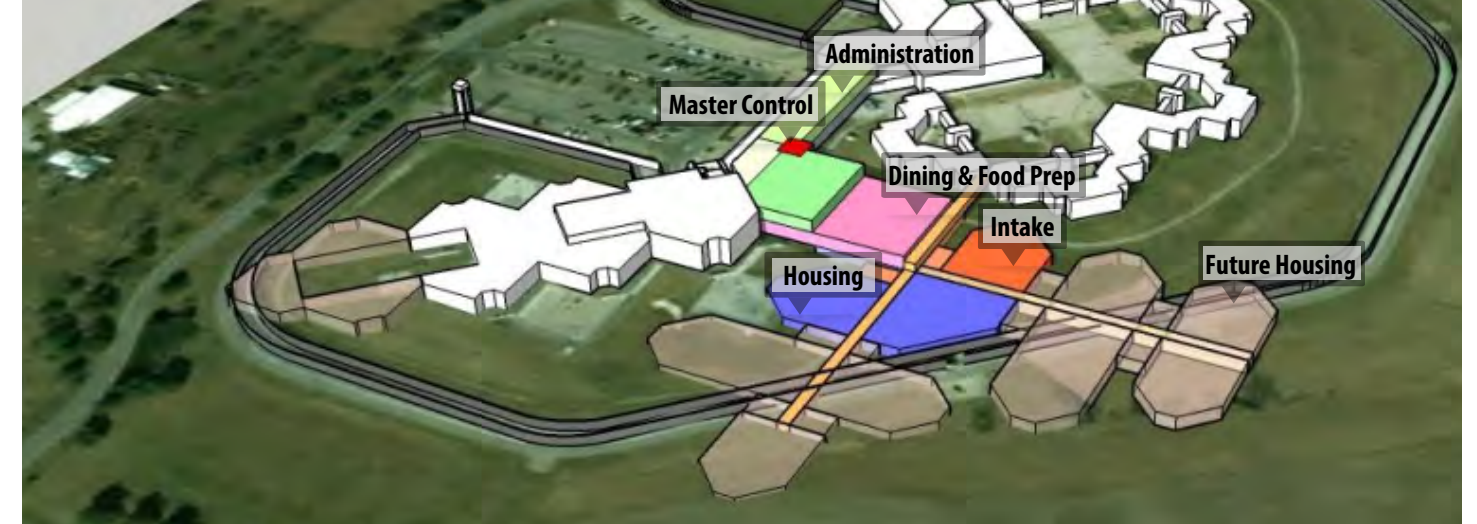
- Authorized Project Budget: \$1.8M
- Final Cost: \$1.55M
- Building Size: 7,488 gross square feet
- Construction Status: Completed in September 2017
- Operational Status: Occupancy in September 2017



### 160-Bed Female Living Unit and Facility Expansion

- Authorized Project Budget: \$26M
- Building Size: 57,018 gross square feet
- Construction Status: Under construction
- Operational Status: Occupancy projected for May 2019

## Future Capital Construction Projects



The reception and treatment center is a monumental project for the agency. This \$75 million facility addresses previously-unmet needs for increased security, behavioral health beds, skilled nursing beds and other facility and infrastructure needs. The intake process will be streamlined and efficient with the new reception center designed at the right size to process new admissions. It provides an opportunity to house and treat individuals with the highest mental health needs and combines skilled nursing facilities into one location for greater efficiency. The food service and dining space this project adds will allow us meet the needs of the entire population. The consolidation of the Diagnostic and Evaluation Center and the Lincoln Correctional Center, two 40-year-old facilities will result in one campus that is more efficient and easier to operate.

## A Look Ahead to FY 2018

### Director Frakes Announces Bold New Recruitment and Retention Initiatives



“These initiatives represent an innovative approach to compensation that invests in our people at our facilities with the greatest needs,” said Frakes. “Today, we are targeting available funds to address our agency’s recruitment and retention challenges.”

On October 2, 2017, Director Scott R. Frakes announced the implementation of bold, unprecedented strategies to address recruiting challenges at the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services’ (NDCS) largest facilities, and the persistent retention challenges at the Tecumseh State Correctional Institution (TSCI).

facility NDCS team members. This is a significant issue at TSCI and NSP. Recruiting new staff members for these facilities will reduce the need for mandatory overtime.

Effective October 2017, new hires at TSCI and NSP, in any permanent classification, will receive a recruitment bonus. The first 100 new team members hired between October 2, 2017 and November 17, 2017,

will receive a recruiting bonus of \$2,500, paid out quarterly in their first year of service.

Also effective October 2017, team members at TSCI will receive a merit incentive based on their years of service that is tied directly to their performance. Since its opening in 2001, TSCI has faced significant staffing shortages.

“Maintaining normal operations at TSCI with vacancies approaching 30 percent is challenging,” said Director Frakes. “The vacancies are driven by the high rate of turnover. We are rewarding the commitment of our TSCI teammates and incentivizing becoming a part of the TSCI team.”

The merit incentive will be applicable only to team members while they are assigned to TSCI. Team members will receive the incentive based on their years of service and satisfactory performance. The merit incentive begins at 2.5 percent for staff with one to three years of service, climbing to 10 percent for staff with more than 10 years of service.



# NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Mission.

**DEPT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES**

## **Facilities**

Nebraska State Penitentiary - NSP

Tecumseh State Correctional Institution - TSCI

Lincoln Correctional Center - LCC

Diagnostic and Evaluation Center - DEC

Omaha Correctional Center - OCC

Nebraska Correctional Center for Women - NCCW

Nebraska Correctional Youth Facility - NCYF

Work Ethic Camp - WEC

Community Corrections Center - Lincoln - CCC-L

Community Corrections Center - Omaha - CCC-O

