

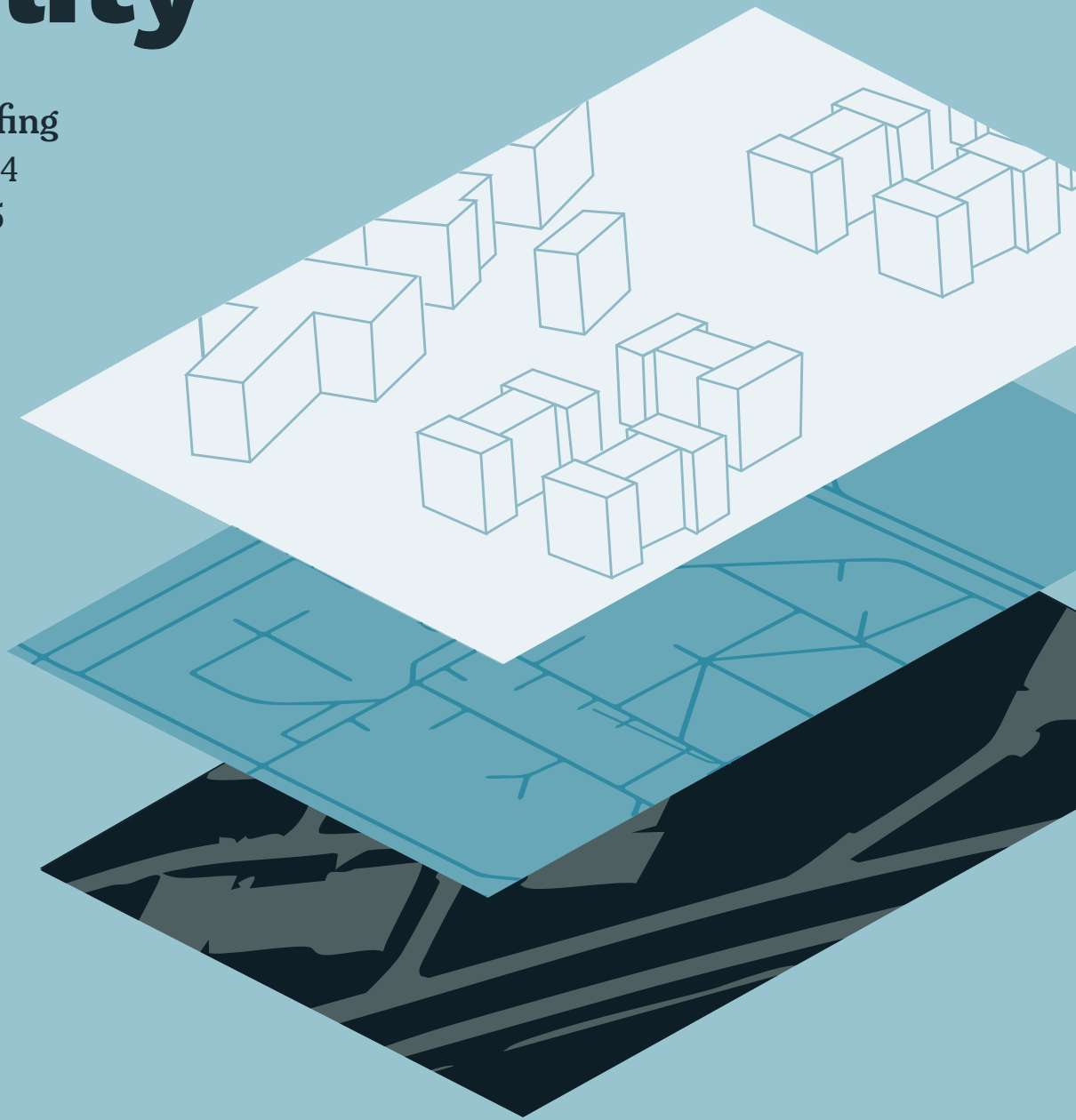
Monitoring Visit To

Washington Correctional Facility

Post-Visit Briefing

March 26-27, 2024

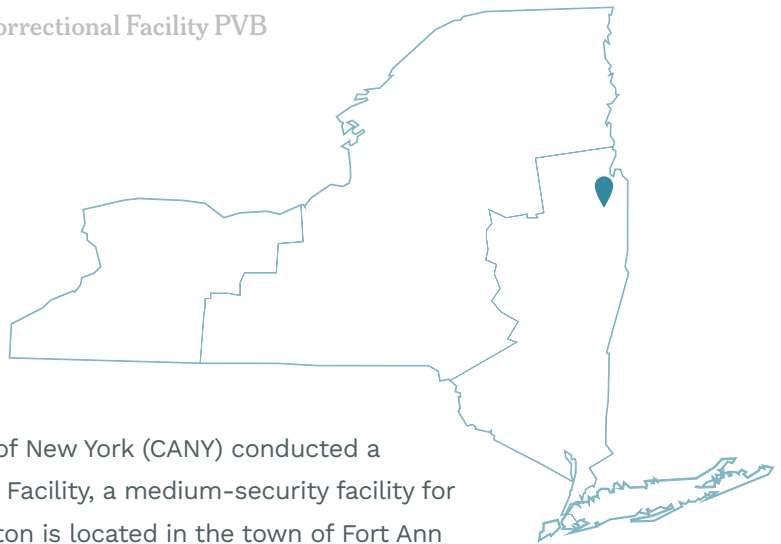
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Background

On March 26-27, 2024, the Correctional Association of New York (CANY) conducted a two-day monitoring visit to Washington Correctional Facility, a medium-security facility for incarcerated individuals 18 years and older. Washington is located in the town of Fort Ann in Washington County. CANY's monitoring visit to Washington was conducted as part of its oversight mandate pursuant to Correctional Law §146(3).

During the monitoring visit, CANY representatives held meetings with the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) facility executive team. CANY also held meetings with the medical staff, the grievance supervisor, the Incarcerated Liaison Committee (ILC) and the Incarcerated Grievance Resolution Committee (IGRC), as well as representatives from the New York State Law Enforcement Officer's Union (Council 82). CANY also met with the Office of Mental Health (OMH) staff via conference call following the monitoring visit. CANY representatives conducted visual observations of housing units, the mess hall, the visiting room, the package room, the mail room, academic and vocational classrooms, the commissary, the horticulture program, the law library, and the general library. These meetings allowed CANY to gain a better understanding of Washington's policies, procedures, and practices.

This report summarizes CANY's monitoring visit to Washington using a combination of data and information collected by CANY representatives during the monitoring visit and a review of DOCCS administrative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the facility through the structure below:

- **Part I: Impressions from Visit.** Part I of this report summarizes CANY's initial impressions as reported to the executive teams at the end of the monitoring visit.
- **Part II: Wallkill Facility Overview.** Part II of this report combines information on the facility structure, operations, and key issues as reported by the executive team and staff.
- **Part III: Findings from Interview Data.** Part III provides a high-level overview of the findings from CANY's analysis of the closed-ended interview questions.
- **Part IV: Analysis of Interview Data.** Part IV presents an analysis of interview data in detail and compares responses collected at Wallkill to those at other medium-security prisons.
- **Appendices A, B, and C** explain CANY's methodology, depict demographic information about the population, and provides aggregated data from the interview protocol used by CANY representatives.

Impressions from Visit

Below are the initial impressions from the visit to Washington that CANY representatives reported to the DOCCS facility executive team during a debrief meeting at the end of the monitoring visit. CANY representatives compiled this list of impressions by identifying recurrent issues discussed with both staff and incarcerated individuals, as well as issues that appeared to be significant, regardless of prevalence. The impressions touch on the following themes: 1) programming, 2) material conditions and environmental issues, 3) staff-incarcerated individual interactions, 4) medical, and 5) discipline. A version of these impressions was also emailed to DOCCS' central office and mailed to the ILC and IGRC groups following the visit.¹

Programming

- **Academic and vocational.** Washington Correctional Facility has a wide range of program offerings. CANY representatives visited the college room space and observed that it had been decorated with college colors and furnished with a computer lab. Students in the program gave positive reports about their college experience. CANY representatives observed the horticulture program to be a peaceful environment with an instructor who is very dedicated to her job. Participants spoke highly of the program.
- **Other programming.** CANY representatives learned about the Canine Training program; people's involvement in the program appears to positively affect the culture and environment of their dormitory including staff-incarcerated individual interactions. Participants also cited potential employment prospects for dog trainers in the community. CANY representatives were informed that the facility expected to launch a Horse Handling and Care program in the near future.
- **Low program participation.** CANY representatives observed low numbers of participants in vocational programs and inquired about some of the possible reasons and solutions. The executive team acknowledged that it was a problem and discussed a few strategies that they have used to encourage participation. CANY representatives suggested exploring the use of positive information reports or commendations to recognize those who are participating actively and encourage participation among others.
- **Recreation.** Many incarcerated people raised concerns about not being able to access recreation, especially during daytime hours. The executive team explained that staff shortages pose a challenge to offering recreation.
- **General library.** CANY representatives learned about the new librarian's commitment to updating the library space and resources available and engaging the incarcerated population through thematic displays and a participatory newsletter. The executive team explained that while incarcerated individuals typically access the library during morning and afternoon

¹ The term "Central Office" used in this report refers to the department administration and executive team located in Albany.

modules when they do not have required programming, individuals unavailable to attend the library in person can write to the librarian to request reading materials. CANY representatives suggested that the executive team consider expanding access to the library.

Material Conditions and Environmental Issues

- **Drinking water.** Many incarcerated people cited concerns about the quality and safety of the drinking water following the recent water main break. CANY representatives observed a water testing report from 2023 (without an exact date listed) posted in one of the housing units and encouraged the executive team to specify the exact date of water testing in the future to help ease concerns. The executive team asserted that they underwent required water testing three times following the water main break before the water could be reinstated per Department of Health regulations.

Staff-Incarcerated Individual Interactions

- **Responsiveness.** CANY representatives observed the executive team responding attentively to concerns from incarcerated people while visiting the various housing units. Many incarcerated people reported having positive working relationships with the executive team.
- **Physical abuse.** Incarcerated people reported numerous instances of physical abuse by security staff occurring throughout the facility including in the draft room, medical building, and vans, particularly of people suspected of drug use. Some incarcerated people also reported witnessing fights among members of the incarcerated population. The proportion of respondents at Washington who reported seeing or experiencing abuse by staff is the second highest in the sample of medium security prisons visited by CANY recently. CANY representatives noted that the forthcoming implementation of body cameras could help resolve some of these issues.
- **Retaliation.** Many incarcerated people cited that they do not file grievances out of fear of retaliation.

Medical Health Care

- **Sick call.** Many incarcerated people across multiple dorms reported not having been able to access medical despite submitting sick call slips.
- **Medications.** Some incarcerated individuals expressed concerns about accessing medications as prescribed, including allegations that their prescription medications had been withheld as a punitive measure.
- **Unprofessional behavior.** Some incarcerated individuals alleged that medical staff engaged in unprofessional behavior, including making pejorative remarks about people participating in the MAT program.

Discipline

- **Programming in SHU and GPC.** Some incarcerated people in SHU and GPC units reported being required to choose between using a tablet or attending programs or recreation. The executive team clarified that people in SHU and GPC can attend programs and recreation as well as use the tablets; they do not have to choose between them. The executive team reported that very few people were coming out for programs in SHU or GPC.

Staff Perspectives

In addition to meeting with union representatives, CANY representatives held conversations with security and civilian staff throughout the facility to get a better understanding of the experiences of staff working at Washington. Staff conveyed challenges including staffing shortages, mental health needs, and frustrations with the HALT law.

- **Staffing shortages.** Staff at Washington reported that staffing shortages and mandatory overtime negatively impact morale, a concern CANY has documented in other reports. To address security staffing shortages, the executive team described a new system they implemented requiring every correction officer to work two 8-hour shifts of overtime in a two-week period. Officers can select the days of the week they will work overtime. Prior to instituting this system, approximately 90% of officers at Washington were “swappers,” meaning that they would often swap a shift with a coworker so that they automatically worked double shifts and therefore could not be assigned a third shift when a need arose for unplanned overtime. The burden fell unevenly on the other 10% of staff to work the unplanned overtime. They believed this new system was more equitable than assigning overtime in reverse seniority order, which disproportionately impacts newer staff.
- **Mental health.** Staff reported that mental health is a concern among officers and that there is stigma within the community and department that deters some from seeking treatment or other assistance. A staff member reported that a correction officer working at Great Meadow had recently died by suicide. Prior to Great Meadow, the officer had worked at Washington and many of the staff at Washington knew him. This staff member explained that staff could speak to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and the supervisors if they need to talk to someone. One sergeant described that there is a “timeout” room where officers can go if they are feeling stressed and need to spend a few minutes away from their post. He explained that when he is made aware of such a situation, he will make sure that officer gets relieved, even if it means covering the post himself.
- **Frustrations with HALT law.** One staff member reported that there are not enough Residential Rehabilitation Unit (RRU) cells across the system. Now that four cells have been removed in the SHU to make space for programming, there is limited capacity at Washington. Due to the lack of space at Washington, staff reported having to move people to other facilities to be placed in SHU during the night shift. These trips to transport individuals to other facilities for SHU placement require staff to leave the facility, causing an additional strain on staff at Washington.

Washington Correctional Facility Overview

Washington Correctional Facility opened in 1985. According to DOCCS Directive 0084, Washington is a medium-security prison used for general confinement of males 18 years and older.² It is in the Town of Fort Ann in Washington County. On the first day of CANY's monitoring visit, there were 581 people in custody; Washington has a capacity of 718.

During CANY's visit, the executive team answered questions about Washington's layout, capital projects, programs, staffing, and the incarcerated population. CANY supplemented the information reported by the executive team by reviewing administrative datasets obtained via Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request. CANY uses these datasets to compare the demographic characteristics of the Washington population and incidents reported in Washington to those of the entire DOCCS system.

Physical Layout

Washington has 12 dormitories total, of which two were not operational during the time of CANY's visit. The facility also operates a Special Housing Unit (SHU) and a General Population Confinement (GPC) unit³, both of which consist of single cells.

Capital Projects

The executive team answered questions about completed and future projects. At the time of CANY's visit, Washington did not have stationary cameras anywhere inside the facility; the only cameras at the facility were along the perimeter fence. The executive team reported that they estimated being ready to implement body-worn cameras in the coming weeks. Sergeants would be the first to wear them, followed by all security staff by the end of 2024. Additional forthcoming projects included upgrades to ventilation systems in the dorms, mess hall, and school and administrative buildings; adding new temperature controls as part of a building management system; and replacing the mess hall floor. The executive team reported that they were slated to undergo an energy upgrade with New York Power Authority, which had previously been canceled due to COVID-19 and security staff shortages. The facility was also anticipating repaving and roof repair projects scheduled in four to five years' time.

Programs

The executive team described the academic, vocational, re-entry, and volunteer-led programs available at the facility. The program and recreation section of this report below summarizes the programs listed by the executive team and any additional discussion of a particular program. Often, this discussion arose from follow-up questions posed by CANY representatives during the executive team meeting and program area walkthroughs. The executive team noted low participation in programs at Washington, and some efforts underway to increase attendance.

Staffing

The executive team answered questions about their security, medical, mental health, program, and

² NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision. (2022, March 11). Washington Correctional Facility (DOCCS Directive 0084). <https://doccs.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2024/11/0084.pdf>

³ The General Population Confined (GPC) unit is a disciplinary housing unit for people who are not eligible for placement in the SHU under the HALT law.

administrative staffing needs at the facility. Washington faced staffing challenges in security, medical, and administrative divisions. Out of 213 correctional officer positions, 48 were vacant and another approximately 20 to 25 officers were on leave. They were anticipating the arrival of about 15 new correction officers via the academy and transfers. There were four and a half vacancies in registered nurses, one dental assistant vacancy, and the physician was on leave. Approximately half of the office assistant positions were vacant, including the critical positions of commissary, storehouse, and state shop. OMH reported having one full time clinician (social worker),⁴ and a part-time clerk. The table below includes details of the positions discussed during a meeting with the executive team.

Table 1. Staffing Numbers Reported by Executive Team

March 26, 2024

Staffing Category and Positions	Reported by Executive Team ⁵	Budgeted Fill Level as of Jan 25, 2024, DOCCS Staffing Report
Security		
Deputy Superintendent of Security	1	1
Captain	1	1
Lieutenants	8	8
Sergeants	13	14
Officers	165	213
Program		
Academic Instructors	9	13
Vocational Instructors	7	13
Offender Rehabilitation Coordinator	7	13
Senior Offender Rehabilitation Coordinator	2	2
Guidance Program Aide	0	1
Medical		
Doctor/Nurse Practitioner	2	2
Dentist	1	1
Dental Assistant	0	1
Nurse	4	9.5
Licensed Practical Nurse	2	2
Nurse Administrator	1	1
Note: The positions listed in this table are not the expansive list of positions at the facility. The positions in this table are verbally reported during the meeting with the executive team.		

⁴ OMH also reported that they had just hired one additional part-time clinical social worker who will work for two days at Washington and three days at Great Meadow.

⁵ The numbers in the table are based on notes taken by CANY staff during conversations with the executive team, these numbers are verbally reported during the meeting and verified by CANY staff with the most recent DOCCS staffing data available. The BFL column in the table is from DOCCS Bi-Weekly Staffing Report dated January 25, 2024.

Population

Per the executive team, the facility's capacity is 718 incarcerated people. On the first day of the visit, March 26, 2024, the executive team reported there were 581 people in custody. The CANY visiting party carried out a total of 89 interviews with incarcerated individuals representing 15% of the population.

Table 2. Breakdown of the Number of People Interviewed

Housing	One-on-One	Group	Total
General Population	83	1	84
Special Housing Unit (SHU) and General Population Confined (GPC)	5		5
Total	88	1	89

CANY reviewed an administrative dataset, "Incarcerated Individuals Under Custody," to (1) supplement the information reported by the executive team and (2) compare the demographic characteristics of the Washington population with that of the rest of the New York State prison population. "Incarcerated Individuals Under Custody" represents the individuals under the custody of DOCCS on a particular day. CANY reviewed the data file from March 1, 2024, the closest available file to the visit date. According to DOCCS Under custody data, on March 1, 2024, there were 601 people incarcerated at Washington.

Unusual Incidents and Deaths

CANY reviewed: (1) DOCCS' unusual incident data for March 2023 to March 2024, (2) State Commission of Correction's (SCOC) data on deaths in custody, which reflects a more complete record of deaths in DOCCS facilities, as some deaths in custody do not necessarily trigger an unusual incident report, (3) Office of Mental Health (OMH) data on suicide attempts, and (4) the Office of the Attorney General's Office of Special Investigation (AG OSI) data on deaths by suicide.⁶

SCOC data shows that there was one death in May 2021, one death in October 2022, one death in December 2023 and one death occurred in 2024 at Washington between January and March 2024.⁷

CANY's review of unusual incidents data reveals that the rates at Washington for most of the selected incidents in the table below are lower or similar to that of the system. The rate of assault on incarcerated individuals by other incarcerated individuals is twice that of the system. The rate of weapons contraband is slightly higher at Washington compared to the system overall. The rate of drug and alcohol contraband incidents systemwide is 4.5 times higher than at Washington; disruptive behavior incidents are twice as high systemwide as they are at Washington.

⁶ DOCCS defines an unusual incident in Directive 4004 as, "a serious occurrence that (1) may impact upon or disrupt facility operations, or (2) has the potential for affecting the Department's public image, or (3) might arouse widespread public interest. In general, any incident shall be reportable under the provisions of this directive which (1) satisfies the definition (above) of 'unusual incident,' or (2) involves the use of chemical weapons, or (3) involves staff use of a weapon, or (4) results in moderate or serious injury to any incarcerated individual/releasee or staff. SCOC's death data reflects a more complete record of deaths because, pursuant to New York Correction Law, section 47(1), the SCOC's correction medical review board is responsible for (1) investigating and reviewing the cause and circumstances surrounding the death of an incarcerated person in a correctional facility and (2) submit a report thereon to the commission and to the governor.

⁷ According to the most recent DOCCS unusual incident data, there were two deaths at Woodbourne following CANY's visit. One death occurred on February 2, 2024, and another occurred April 16, 2024.

Table 3. Monthly Average Incident Rate per 1,000 Incarcerated IndividualsMarch 2023 – March 2024⁸

Type	Incident	Washington		Systemwide	
		Count	Avg. Monthly Rate 1k PPL. in Custody	Count	Avg. Monthly Rate 1k PPL. in Custody
Assaults	Assaults on Incarcerated Individual	94	13.1	2,319	6.0
	Assault on Staff	31	4.3	1,820	4.7
	Other Assaults	0	0.0	12	0.0
Contrabrand	Drugs/Alcohol	3	0.4	702	1.8
	Weapons	73	10.2	3,252	8.4
	Other	2	0.3	444	1.2
Disruptive Behavior	Refused Instruction/Refused Strip Frisk	20	2.8	1,785	4.6
	Cell Extraction	0	0.0	305	0.8
	Other	4	0.6	338	0.9
Facility Disruption	Accident	7	1.0	452	1.1
	Lost/Stolen Property	2	0.3	61	0.2
	Fire	0	0.0	41	0.1
Health-Related	Accident	9	1.3	763	2.0
	Lost/Stolen Property	4	0.6	148	0.4
	Contagious Disease	1	0.1	125	0.3
Staff Use of Force	Use of Other Weapon	0	0.0	12	0.0
	Use of Baton	1	0.1	141	0.4
	Use of Chemical Irritant	44	6.1	2,806	7.3
Source: DOCCS Unusual Incident Reports, March 2023 – March 2024					

Table 4. Monthly Average Rate of Suicide Attempts and Deaths by Suicide per 1,000 Incarcerated Individuals,March 2023 – March 2024⁹

Incident	Washington		Systemwide	
	Count	Avg. Monthly Rate 1k PPL. in Custody	Count	Avg. Monthly Rate 1k PPL. in Custody
Suicide Attempts Excludes deaths by suicide	0	0.0	58	0.1
Deaths by Suicide Excludes non-fatal suicide attempts	0	0.0	13	0.0
Note: OMH's Official Policy Manual defines a suicide attempt as "an act committed by a patient in an effort to cause his or her own death." Source(s): OMH data on suicide attempts; Office of the Attorney General's Office of Special Investigation data on deaths by suicide				

8 This table presents the average monthly rate of these incidents per 1,000 incarcerated individuals. These rates are imperfect because the average population is calculated using the limited number of "under custody" files accessible to CANY. This table provides an approximate measure for how common an incident is at a given facility compared to the system overall. Data represented here is from the 12 months before March 2024.

9 This table presents the average monthly rate of suicide attempts and deaths by suicide per 1,000 incarcerated individuals. These rates are imperfect because the average population is calculated using the limited number of "under custody" files accessible to CANY. This table provides an approximate measure for how common an incident is at a given facility compared to the system overall. Data represented here is from the 12 months before March 2024.

Summary of Findings from Interview Data

CANY staff analyzed the interviews conducted on the monitoring visit to better understand (1) the provision of basic services, (2) medical and dental health care, (3) mental health care, (4) programming and recreation, (5) staff-incarcerated individual interactions, (6) grievances, (7) discipline, and (8) material conditions and environmental issues at Washington. Below are the findings from the interview data.

Basic Provision of Services

1. A slightly lower-than-average number of respondents reported that the commissary at Washington is adequately stocked in comparison to other facilities. Concerns about exchanging items and the high cost of items were raised.
2. The proportion of respondents at Washington who reported receiving package items in a timely manner was the lowest among all prisons in the sample. This is consistent with concerns about delays, which were believed to be caused by staff shortages and resulted in spoiled items in packages.
3. The proportion of respondents reporting adequately portioned meals is lower than in most other prisons in the sample. Incarcerated people raised concerns about the quality of food, specifically concerns about too much soy.
4. Nearly all respondents reported good access to phones and tablets. The proportion of respondents at Washington who reported being able to make phone calls is lower than most other prisons in the sample. This is consistent with concerns raised about limited phones in the units.
5. Most Incarcerated people reported having access to in-person visits. However, concerns about the availability of photographs on Saturdays were raised.

Medical and Dental Health Care

6. The proportion of incarcerated people who reported receiving adequate medical care is slightly higher than most other medium security prisons in the sample. However, many incarcerated individuals raised concerns about their experiences with health care services, including long waits or non-response to sick call, professionalism of staff, and inappropriate responses to medical emergencies.

Mental Health

7. Some respondents in general population units at Washington reported that they were getting the mental health programs that they need, while others reported challenges accessing mental health services, or desire for more mental health programming and counseling to meet their needs.

Programming and Recreation

8. Incarcerated people reported positive experiences with academic and vocational programs, however, several issues complicated people's experiences of programs including limited program offerings, inability to access programs, and being on a waitlist to enroll. Incarcerated people also reported experiencing idle time and limited opportunities for recreation. The executive team reported that while enrollment in programs was at capacity, there was low attendance in vocational programs.

Staff-Incarcerated Individual Interactions

9. The proportion of respondents who reported seeing or experiencing verbal, physical, or sexual abuse by staff at Washington is higher than in most medium security prisons in the sample. This is supported by concerns expressed about staff seeming irritable and aggressive when interacting with incarcerated people. Reports of racialized abuse were higher than average compared to other prisons in the sample.

Grievances

10. The proportion of respondents in Washington who reported filing grievances is the lowest than at all other prisons in the sample. No respondents perceived the grievance process as fair.

Discipline

11. The proportion of respondents in Washington who reported that the disciplinary system is fair is the highest among all prisons in the sample. Despite this, some respondents believed the disciplinary process in Washington to be biased.

Material Conditions and Environmental Issues

12. Several respondents alluded to infrastructure problems when highlighting concerns about the facility's drinking water and temperature controls. The share of respondents who reported having clean drinking water and who characterized the facility's temperature control as adequate is lower than in most other prisons in the sample.

Analysis of Interview Data

The following analysis of interview data supports the impressions that CANY representatives presented to the executive team including (1) people's ability to access medical and dental care, (2) concerns with programming and recreation, (3) concerns with material conditions and environmental issues, and (4) allegations of misconduct and physical abuse by staff. Staffing shortages at Washington presented challenges to facility operations, contributing to concerns about access to recreation and prompt processing of packages. To gauge whether the responses at Washington mirror those at other medium-security prisons, CANY compared close-ended responses collected on this visit to those collected at other medium-security prisons between October 2022 and February 2024, including Mid-State, Marcy, Ulster, Wyoming, Woodbourne, and Fishkill.

Basic Provision Of Services

CANY representatives asked incarcerated people in general population units about their access to services such as commissary, packages, food, phone calls, and visits. Below are the findings and responses to those questions.

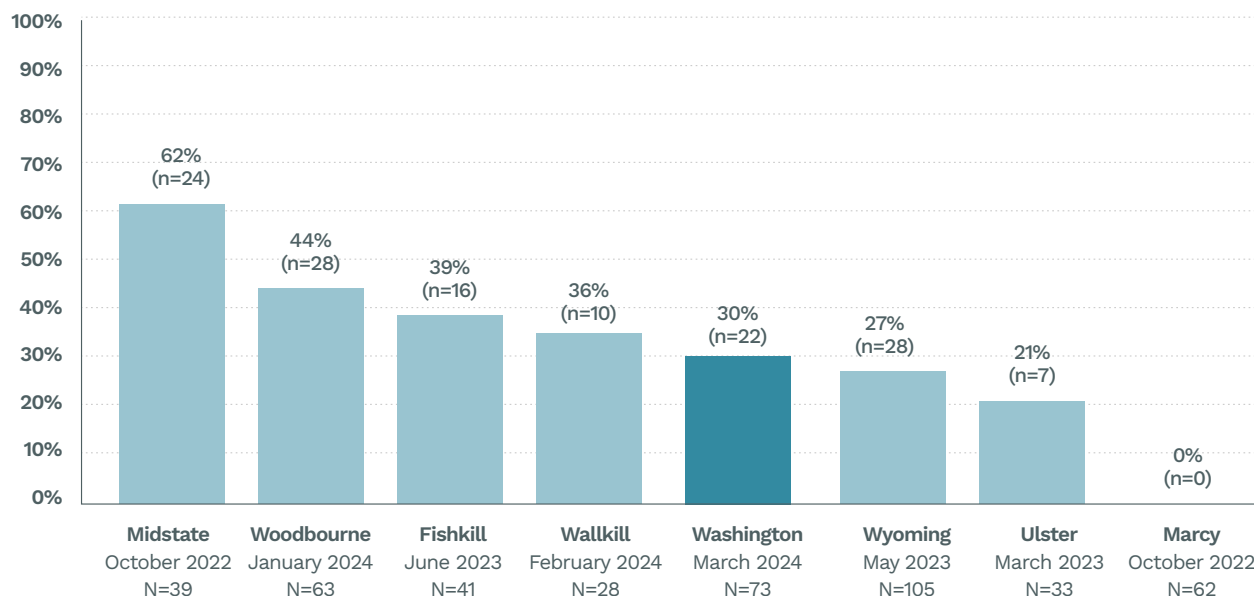
Commissary

1 A slightly lower-than-average number of respondents reported that the commissary at Washington is adequately stocked in comparison to other facilities. Concerns about exchanging items and the high cost of items were raised.

Figure 1. Reports of Access to Commissary

The proportion of respondents at **Washington** who reported that the commissary is adequately stocked falls at the median point of the sample.

► % of respondents in GP units who reported that the commissary is adequately stocked on a regular basis



Thirty percent (30%, 22/73) of respondents in general population units at Washington reported that the commissary is adequately stocked. Concerns about out-of-stock items, issues with exchanging items and high cost of items were common themes. Qualitative responses provide further detail below.

Out of stock items and supply chain management

In open-ended comments, 94% (49/52) of respondents discussed unsatisfactory experiences with the commissary. 37 of 43 respondents who commented on commissary issues identified items as being out of stock. Respondents speculated that the problem derived from poor supply management.

- "They are forever running out of stuff here. There are like 50 items on the out-of-stock list"
- "They run out of stuff we need."
- "On the commissary sheet, there is usually more items unavailable than available."
- "They run out too quickly. They don't know how much to order."

Some incarcerated people specified items which were frequently missing.

- ▶ “Some things have been missing for a long time - peanut butter, rice, butter, all gone for over a month.”
- ▶ “Rice, chips and noodles are often out of stock. Hygiene items are stocked sometimes.”
- ▶ “A lot of stuff out of stock, no butter for approximately 3 weeks, no chips.”
- ▶ “They run out of a lot of things like rice and pasta.”

Difficulties in exchanging items and delays in accessing the commissary

Compounding the issue of the high number of items out of stock, four respondents said that it was not permissible to exchange out-of-stock items with alternatives.

- ▶ “The people that run it are brutal. They won't let you replace if something is out of stock.”
- ▶ “Don't let you exchange.”
- ▶ “They don't tell you anything about what is there until after you've ordered.”

In addition to the difficulties faced with exchanging items, respondents cited another issue with the system leading to delays in accessing the commissary. One respondent said that “there is a long wait” as they only call four people to the commissary at a time. Another said that some days commissary is not called due to the delays, meaning that some people had to wait until the next day to access their items.

Referring to the system used to call people to pick up their orders, one respondent said that access to items “depends a lot on when you get called” and said that he did not know how they chose the order. Another said that “access to commissary is based on a pass, and it's random who gets the pass first and who's in line.”

High and increasing prices with low wages and limited buy limit

Seven respondents who elaborated on their experiences with commissary raised concerns about unaffordable items.

- ▶ “Prices going up like crazy”
- ▶ “The prices are ridiculous”
- ▶ “Prices very difficult to deal with, keep going up.”

ILC members also noted that the effects of inflation in the commissary items paired with stagnant wages for incarcerated individuals have affected the ability to buy goods from the commissary.

Some respondents cited the prices in the context of the very low wages paid.

- ▶ “It’s very expensive, especially considering the low wages paid in prison.”
- ▶ “Prices are steadily going up but the wages/pay are not. No cost of living increase here.”

Others spoke of the high prices in the context of the \$90 buy limit for a combined order of food and hygiene items. One respondent said, “The limits need to be raised.” Another suggested separating food and hygiene items so that each has its own buy limit, which would allow people to purchase more items in each category.

Packages

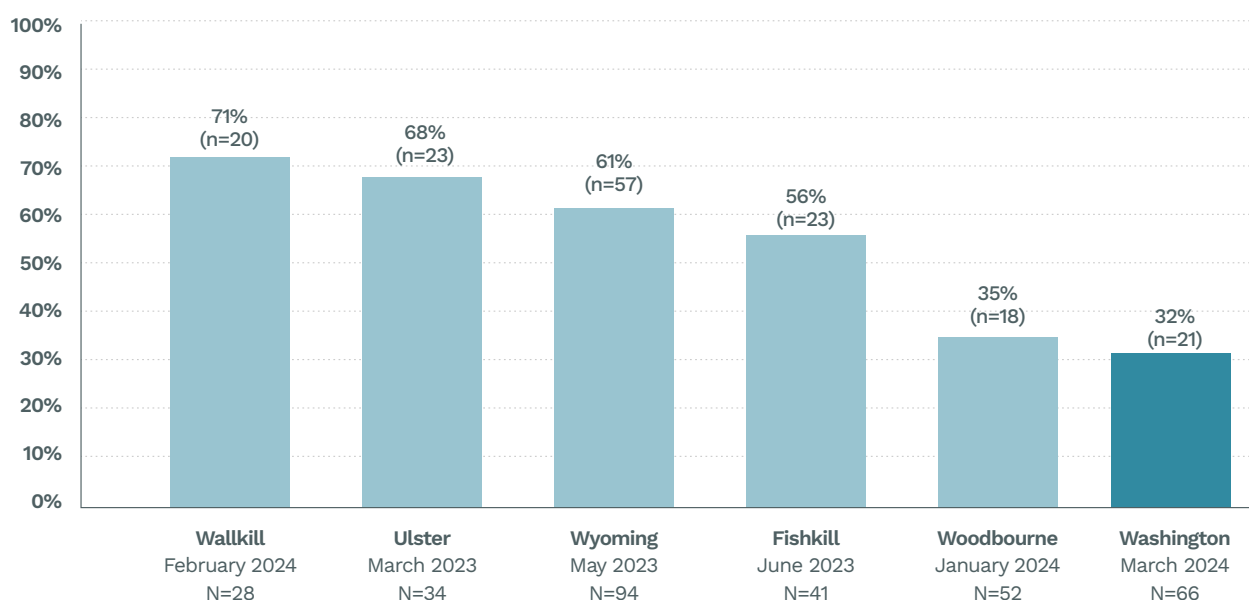
2 The proportion of respondents at Washington who reported receiving package items in a timely manner was the lowest among all prisons in the sample. This is consistent with concerns about delays, which were believed to be caused by staff shortages and resulted in spoiled items in packages.

Closed-ended responses indicated more severe delays in receipt of packages than at comparable prisons recently visited by CANY.

Figure 2. Reports of Access to Packages

The proportion of respondents at Washington who reported receiving package items in a timely manner is the lowest among all prisons in the sample.

- ▶ % of respondents in GP units who reported being able to access items from packages in a timely manner



- ▶ **Note:** CANY did not ask this question at Mid-State or Marcy.

Mixed responses on timeliness of package distribution

Respondents at Wallkill were more positive about timely package delivery than at any of the other comparable facilities recently visited by CANY. ILC members noted that the regularly assigned package officer is “good,” but also stated there are issues when that officer is not there.

When asked to expand, respondents supported the positive findings from closed-ended responses.

- ▶ “Comes to you the same day.”
- ▶ “Takes less than a day.”
- ▶ “Never a problem.”
- ▶ “Lately it's been good. The officer there does a good job.”

Delays in receiving packages

Frustrations with package procedures also came up frequently in the interviews; 91% (50/55) of respondents expressed an unsatisfactory experience with packages at the facility. Most concerns were related to the timeliness of packages (43 instances), which respondents attributed to staffing shortages (13 instances). Respondents elaborated on their experiences with delays and gave a wide range of timeframes for the delay ranging from four days to several weeks. One respondent said that he had to wait up to three months for a package.

- ▶ “Sometimes it can take 4-5 days.”
- ▶ “Packages take forever, up to 21 days.”
- ▶ “Always late, real lax. It's usually 2-3 week wait.”

Twenty-four percent (24%, 13/55) of respondents cited staff shortages as an explanation for affecting operations.

- ▶ “When I first got here yes [package receipt was timely] but has slowed with staff shortages beginning in early 2023”
- ▶ “They say they're understaffed”
- ▶ “90% backed up - excuse is short on staff”
- ▶ “The guy tries his best to do it but there is limited staffing in the package room”

Perishable items

Respondents identified spoiled food as a consequence of the delays. One respondent said that he had stopped ordering perishable items as a result. “If I order food, I order food that

doesn't go bad." Another said that sometimes food spoils and claims for reimbursement don't get approved. He reported that the administration said they were not responsible for his food.

- ▶ "The prison is short-staffed so some people (not me personally) have experienced food spoilage from the delay in getting packages."
- ▶ "Some things go bad while you wait."
- ▶ "Sometimes it takes a minute to arrive. Sometimes the food spoils."
"If I order food, I order food that doesn't go bad."

Another said that sometimes food spoils and claims for reimbursement don't get approved. He reported that staff had told him that they were not responsible for his food.

Five respondents reported satisfactory experiences with packages. Some incarcerated people reported that efforts were being made to prioritize processing food packages. One respondent said that the staff tries to get packages with perishables to people faster, but other items take longer. Another said that he receives food within a week, and non-perishables can take up to one month.

In discussing the challenges related to staffing the package room, the executive team stated that the package room is opened in the evening if there is not enough staff during the day. ILC members suggested that incarcerated individuals should be allowed to work in the package room to assist and expedite operations.

Food

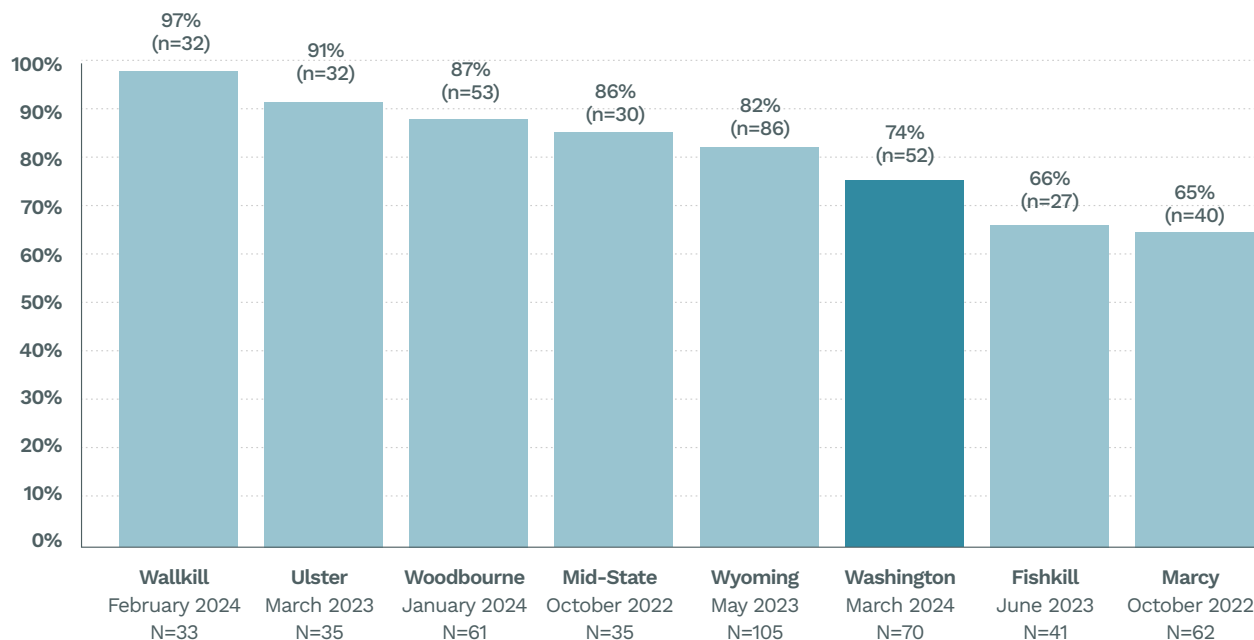
3 The proportion of respondents reporting adequately portioned meals is lower than in most other prisons in the sample. Incarcerated people raised concerns about the quality of food, specifically concerns about too much soy.

Food was a major concern raised by incarcerated people throughout the CANY monitoring visit, including concerns about too much soy, portion sizes, and avoidance of the mess hall due to harassment by staff. Sixty-five percent (65%, 28/43) of respondents had unsatisfactory experiences in Washington, citing insufficient portions, poor quality of food and concerns accessing the mess hall.

Figure 3. Reports of Access to Meals

The proportion of respondents at **Washington** who reported receiving three adequately portioned meals a day is the lower than in most other prisons in the sample.

► % of respondents in GP units who reported receiving three meals a day in adequate portions

**Insufficient portions**

Fourteen respondents specifically addressed the poor portion sizes at Washington. One respondent compared the portion size to that of the size for "feeding a cat." Another said that they are provided "the bare minimum."

- "My children would laugh at the meals we get."
- "Portions could be better - we're adult men."
- "After some meals, you still feel hungry."

Poor quality food and overuse of soy

When asked to elaborate on their experiences seven respondents spoke about the poor quality of food in general. One cited the need for more seasoning/seasoning. Five respondents specifically identified excessive soy as an issue. One stated that food was better in the early 2000s when they considered it real food.

- "Food is lousy"
- "Gross"

- ▶ “Needs to not be soy-based.”
- ▶ “They just throw shit together”
- ▶ “Now it is just soy”

Harassment and issues accessing the mess hall

Eighteen of 43 respondents included people stating they avoided the mess hall. Four of these identified treatment from staff as the reason they chose not to go. One said that he does not go because the correctional officers harass them. Another said that incarcerated people cannot go to the mess hall if they are wearing the wrong shirt.

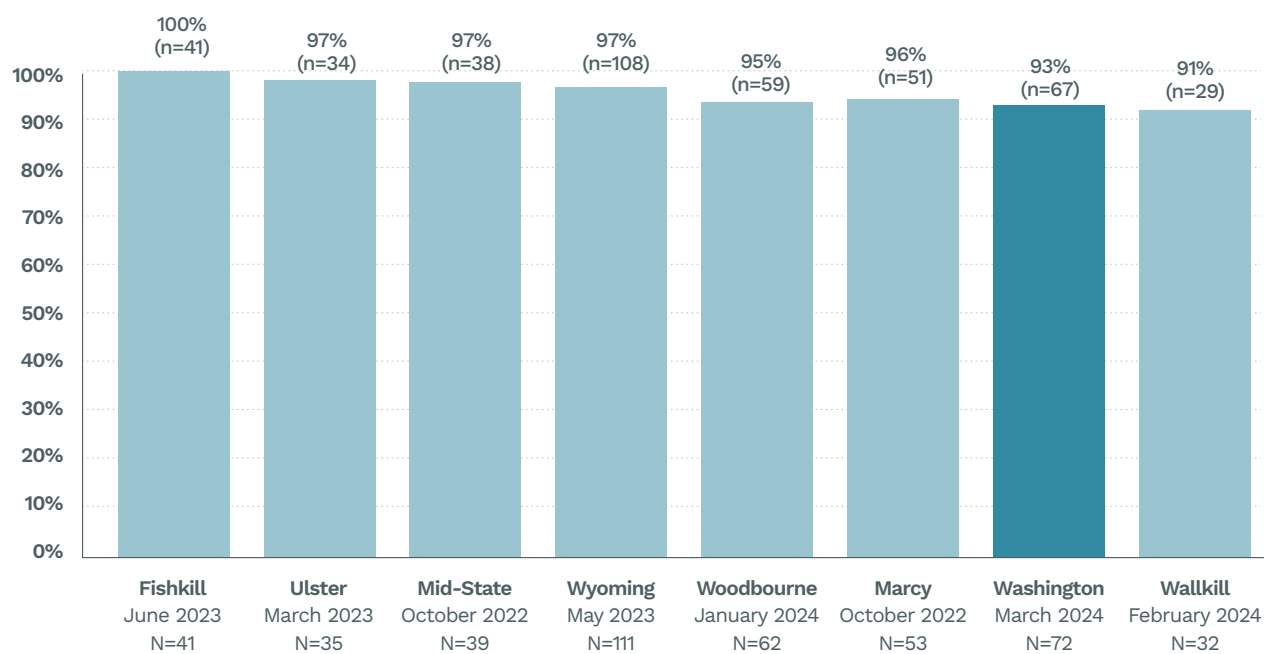
Phones & Tablets

4 Nearly all respondents reported good access to phones and tablets. The proportion of respondents at Washington who reported being able to make phone calls is lower than most other prisons in the sample. This is consistent with concerns raised about limited phones in the units.

Figure 4. Reports of Access to Phone Calls

Most respondents in the sample reported being able to make calls. The proportion of respondents at Washington who reported being able to make calls is lower than in most other prisons in the sample.

- ▶ % of respondents in GP units who reported being able to make calls, either by using the phones or a tablet.



- ▶ **Note:** At Marcy and Mid-State, CANY asked “Do you have access to phone calls, either by using the phones or through a tablet?”

Limited phones available

Four respondents reported unsatisfactory experiences with phones at Washington. While CANY did not directly ask incarcerated people to elaborate on their experiences, several incarcerated people raised concerns about the insufficient number of phones available in the housing units. Three people separately stated that two phones are not sufficient for a dorm that houses 50 people. CANY representatives observed two phones in the housing units visited during the monitoring visit. Four respondents reported that phones are controlled by incarcerated people in the housing units. One stated that there are two phones, “One for gangs. One for everybody else.”

Visits

5 Most Incarcerated people reported having access to in-person visits. However, concerns about the availability of photographs on Saturdays were raised.

Eighty-one percent (81%, 58/72) of respondents in general population units reported that they had access to in-person visits. CANY representatives learned that video visitation services are also provided in the multipurpose room. According to a recent CANY analysis, people incarcerated in Washington Correctional Facility are an average of 156 miles from their county of commitment.¹⁰ The DOCCS website states that visitation at Washington is available on weekends and holidays from 7:30am to 2:00pm. Weekend visits are divided into specific segments of the population by the first letter of the last name of the incarcerated person.¹¹

Incarcerated individuals can take a picture with visitors through a service referred to as “click click.” However, this is only available on Saturdays. One respondent elaborated on his experience with this service and reported that his family came from California for the first time in six months, but the service was not operating due to staffing shortages. The ILC suggested allowing incarcerated people to operate the camera when there is a shortage of staff on weekends so that incarcerated people don’t miss out on this service.

¹⁰ To better understand where incarcerated people are held relative to where they were sentenced to prison, CANY conducted an analysis. In 2023, incarcerated people were 140 miles away from their commitment counties on average. <https://www.correctionalassociation.org/distance-analysis>

¹¹ washingtoncf_visitation_schedule_2024.pdf

Healthcare

6 The proportion of incarcerated people who reported receiving adequate medical care is slightly higher than most other medium security prisons in the sample. However, many incarcerated individuals raised concerns about their experiences with health care services, including long waits or non-response to sick call, professionalism of staff, and inappropriate responses to medical emergencies.

CANY representatives met with the facility nurse administrator, who acknowledged that staffing is an ongoing challenge at Washington Correctional Facility. On the day of CANY's visit, in addition to the nurse administrator, the reported staffing was as follows: one nurse practitioner, eight nurses (four DOCCS nurses and four contracted nurses), two Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), and one dentist. There were four and a half vacancies in registered nurses, one dental assistant vacancy, and the physician was on leave. The nurse administrator reported doing a significant amount of overtime to compensate for vacancies. She reported that the process for hiring agency nurses to fill gaps had been slow.¹²

Satisfaction with health care

Sixty-two percent (62%; 18/29) of people interviewed in general population units reported receiving adequate medical care. This is slightly higher than other prisons in the sample (see Figure 5). However qualitative data provided further detail regarding people's experiences with medical care. There were many reports (26 individuals) of dissatisfaction with the quality of medical care, including complaints regarding neglect or delays in receiving treatment (18 instances), and concerns regarding the professionalism of staff (10 individuals). For example, one respondent noted concerns about a lack of privacy of medical information, stating "officers know more about my information than I do." Additionally, half of the individuals who initially reported satisfactory care qualified their responses by noting delays accessing care, or inconsistencies in responses to sick call.¹³ For example, one individual noted, "I have a really good rapport with medical. I have a special condition where I have to be there frequently." This respondent went on to note that he only gets to see medical "as long as sick call slips are picked up - there's issues with this sometimes." Another responded noted, "care is adequate if they actually end up seeing you."

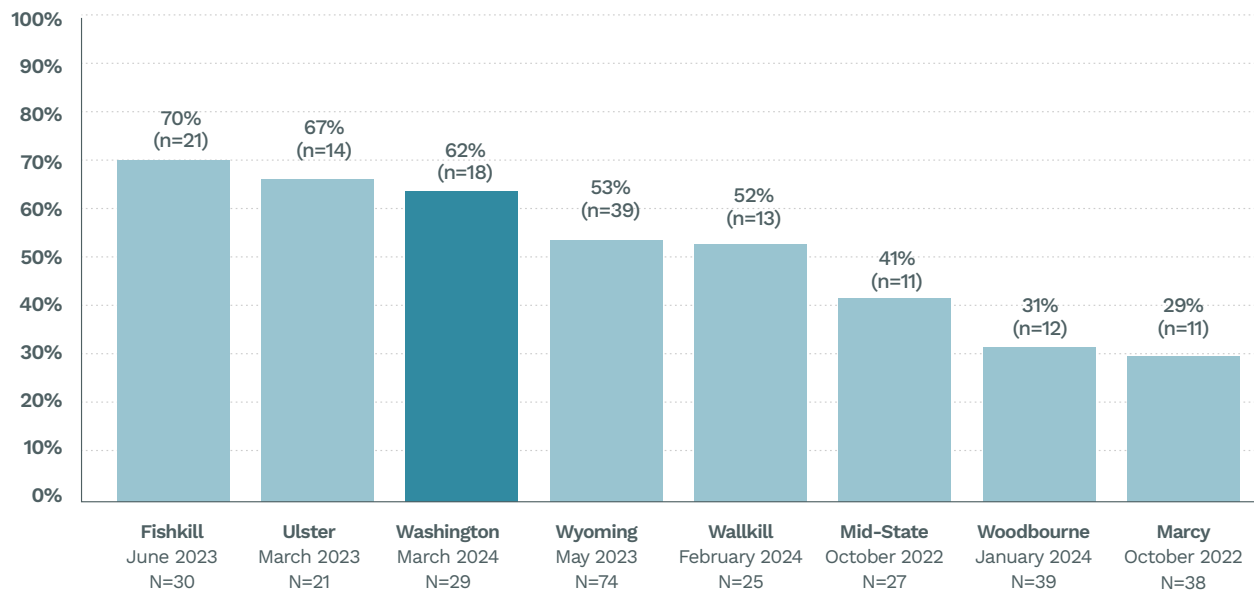
¹² The nurse administrator noted that two more contracted nurses were starting the next day. She reported sending the request for these nurses in January (two months before CANY's visit).

¹³ Five out of 10 respondents.

Figure 5. Reports of Satisfaction of Health Care

The proportion of respondents at **Washington** who reported receiving adequate medical care is higher than in most other prisons in the sample.

► % of respondents in GP units who reported receiving an adequate level of medical care



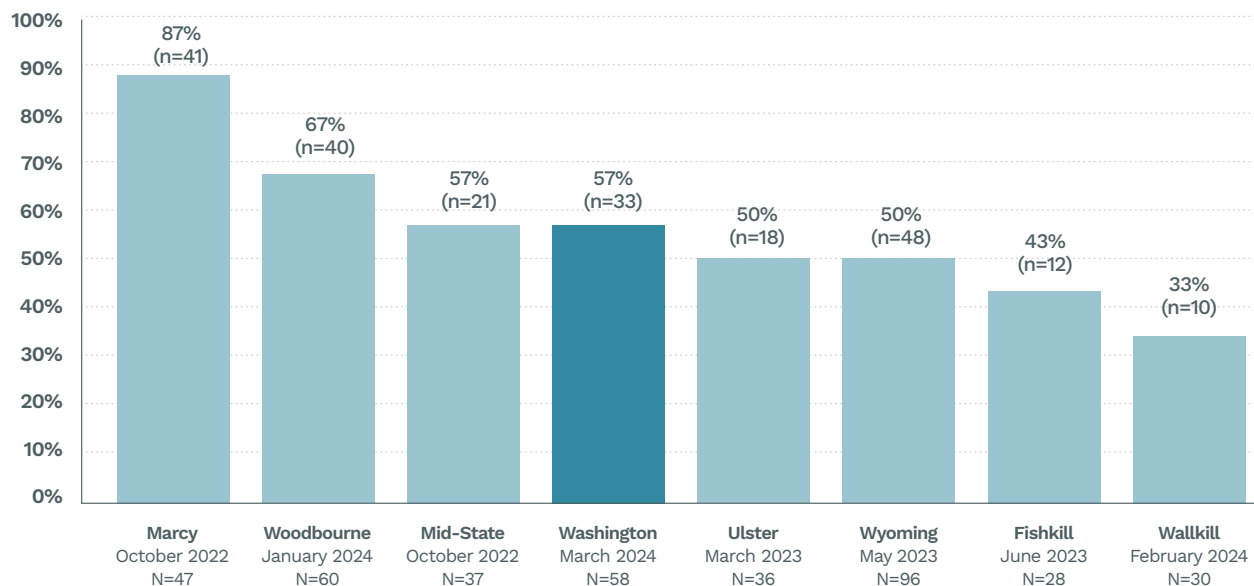
Forty-two percent (42%, 11/26) of people in general population units reported receiving adequate dental care. When asked to provide further information regarding their experiences with dental care, one respondent said he had a positive experience with dental care, reporting that he was seen immediately. Several others (14 individuals) raised concerns about unsatisfactory experiences with dental care, including lack of access to cleanings and long delays waiting for care:

- "I was told I was put on the dental wait list then I was never seen in 8 months."
- "[The] dentist only pulls teeth, [there is] no hygienist."
- "The dentist only does emergencies."

Figure 6. Reports of Unaddressed Medical or Dental Needs

The proportion of respondents at **Washington** who reported having unaddressed health needs is just above the median point of the sample.

► % of respondents in GP units who reported having unaddressed medical or dental needs

**Response to sick call**

Fifty-seven percent (57%, 33/58) of people interviewed in general population units reported having “unaddressed medical needs.” This was just above the median, compared to other medium security facilities in the sample. Sixty-five percent (65%, 34/52) of respondents in general population units reported receiving medical care in response to requests. Though response times varied (see Appendix C, Table 3), 36% (9/25) reported receiving medical within two days, 24% (6/25) reported receiving care within a week, 12% (3/25) reported receiving care within two weeks, 16% (4/25) reported waiting a month, and 12% (3/25) reported waiting more than a month following a sick call request. During interviews, 17 respondents raising concerns about long delays or non-response to sick call requests:

- “10 people here kept putting in sick calls – [they are] not being picked up; we’re all sick in the dorm.”
- “They never call for sick call.”
- “Nobody picks up the sick call slips. A kid passed out because he was sick, the COs left him.”

The nurse administrator explained that sick call slips are kept in a locked box in the dorms and security staff are responsible for collecting them between midnight and 2am. She noted

that in response to an American Correctional Association (ACA) audit and concerns about sick call slips not being collected in the SHU, a nurse now collects sick call slips in the SHU.¹⁴

Responses to medical emergencies

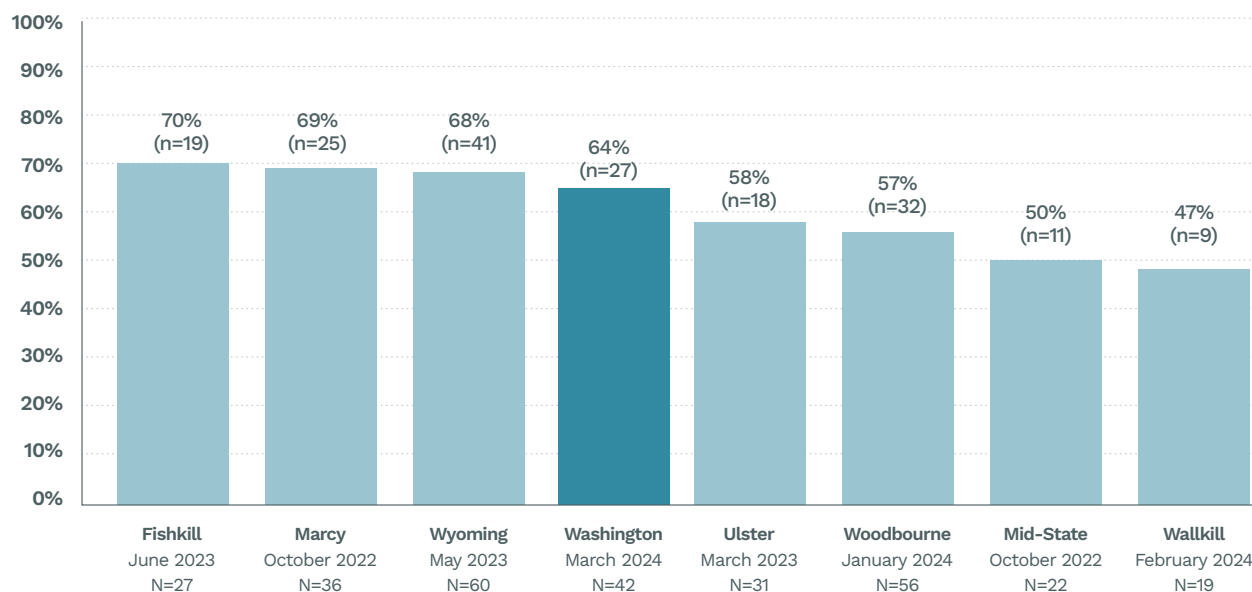
In CANY's meeting with the ILC and IGRC, concerns were raised regarding inappropriate security staff responses to medical emergencies, and allegations of incarcerated people being assaulted either on the way to or while in medical examination rooms.¹⁵ During interviews, 15 people reported concerns regarding responses to emergencies, including six people who reported staff responding aggressively to people presumed to be intoxicated.¹⁶

- ▶ "Staff beat me up. Took me to medical and got them to write an intoxication ticket."
- ▶ "It's always a physical response."
- ▶ "I had a panic attack. They didn't respond, said I needed to put in a sick call."
- ▶ "Sometimes get taken on a joy ride (in vans) and get assaulted by multiple officers."
- ▶ "In emergency [they] beat you up before you go to medical."

Figure 7. Reports of Access to Medication

The proportion of respondents at Washington who reported receiving medication as prescribed is above the median point of the sample

- ▶ % of respondents in GP units who reported receiving medication as prescribed, including scheduling and dosage.



▶ **Note:** Excludes "N/A" responses

¹⁴ CANY visited and spoke to five individuals in the SHU. 40% (2/5) reported that they requested and received medical care, the other 60% (3/5) either did not respond, or reported that this question was not applicable to them.

¹⁵ CANY observed the two medical isolation rooms on site in the health center. The nurse administrator explained that these are for "temporary placement" for up to 24 hours, and a nurse is responsible for monitoring incarcerated individuals placed in these rooms.

¹⁶ This issue is discussed in CANY's report on the implementation of Medicated Assisted Treatment program, available at http://correctionalassociation.org/s/CANY_MATReporting_12132024.pdf

Access to Medication

Sixty-four percent (64%, 41/60) of people interviewed in general population units reported receiving medication as prescribed, including scheduling and dosage. One incarcerated person gave positive feedback about medications, noting “they are good, they give me my meds and my vitamins.” Other incarcerated people reported issues with medication, including delays or challenges accessing medications (10 instances), or concerns regarding timing of medication administration (2 instances). For example, one incarcerated person noted that those who are fasting for Ramadan must either break their fast or take the medication without food. Another incarcerated individual reported that he went five days without MAT medications, which he said DOCCS explained was because they had not picked up the medication from the pharmacy.

MAT Medication

On the day of CANY’s visit, there were 89 people enrolled in the MAT program at Washington Correctional Facility. Eight individuals that CANY interviewed in general population units provided feedback regarding their experiences on the MAT program. Of these, seven reported negative experiences, including concerns about having to take the monthly injectable rather than daily dose buprenorphine formulation (4 instances), challenges accessing the program (3 individuals), and reports of bullying and harassment of MAT participants. For example, one individual noted that staff are “disrespectful” about MAT, “they treat us like junkies.” Concerns regarding stigmatization and bullying of MAT participants were also raised in the ILC/IGRC meeting.¹⁷ On the other hand, one incarcerated individual CANY interviewed provided positive feedback regarding the program, noting “the MAT program saved my life.”

Mental Health Care

7 Some respondents in general population units at Washington reported that they were getting the mental health programs that they needed, while others reported challenges accessing mental health services, or desire for more mental health programming and counseling to meet their needs.

At the time of CANY’s visit, Washington was an OMH level 3 facility, meaning that OMH staff are assigned to the facility on a part-time basis and able to provide treatment and medication to incarcerated people with “moderate mental disorder” or who are in remission from a disorder, and who are determined by OMH staff to be able to function adequately in the facility with such level of staffing.¹⁸ OMH has an office onsite at Washington in the medical

¹⁷ These challenges are discussed in more detail in CANY’s MAT Report http://correctionalassociation.org/s/CANY_MATReporting_12132024.pdf.

¹⁸ Prisons are classified as Mental Health Service Levels (1-6) depending on the amount of mental health services and resources available at the facility. See NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, Bureau of Mental Health (2021) ‘Mental Health Program Descriptions’, at

building. OMH reported staffing including one full-time clinician (social worker),¹⁹ and a part-time administrative staffer who visits one day per week. On the day of CANY's meeting with OMH,²⁰ OMH reported that there were 132 people on the caseload, which represented about 22% of the population.²¹

Access to mental health services

Twenty-seven percent (27%, 15/55) of respondents in general population units at Washington reported that they were getting the mental health programs that they needed.²² Qualitative data provides further context. Three individuals spoke positively about their experiences, and nine individuals raised concerns about challenges accessing mental health services or their desire for more mental health services, counseling, or support to ameliorate the impact of the prison environment on their mental health. For example, one individual noted that there “needs to be more positive activities and opportunities for self-help. It's mentally draining, no rehabilitation.”

Quality of mental health services

Among those who reported accessing mental health services, feedback regarding quality of mental health care in qualitative data was mixed. Some people reported positive experiences with OMH services and staff, while others raised concerns about the scope or quality of engagement with OMH.

- ▶ "OMH is doing a great job here. I was having concerns about missing conditional release, OMH staff gave me good coping skills, so I'm not so concerned"
- ▶ “They don’t listen to me as much as I want them to.”
- ▶ “They lowered my medication, and the dosage was too low. When I complained, they took me off the medication for 2-3 months. There is no counseling; just dispensing medication.”

Programming and Recreation

8 Incarcerated people reported positive experiences with academic and vocational programs, however, several issues complicated

<https://www.op.nysed.gov/sites/op/files/surveys/mhpsw/doccs-att6.pdf>

¹⁹ OMH also reported that they had just hired one additional part-time clinical social worker who will work for two days at Washington and three days at Great Meadow.

²⁰ CANY had a telephone meeting with OMH on April 19, 2024. This included the forensic unit chief and forensic program administrator.

²¹ CANY requested and received OMH caseload data via FOIL. As of March 29, 2024, there were 124 people on the OMH caseload, including 114 incarcerated individuals who were designated OMH level 3, and 10 incarcerated individuals who were designated level 4.

²² This is lower compared to 58% (11/19) of respondents in general population units at Franklin Correctional Facility (which is also a medium security, OMH level 3 facility) reported having access to the mental health programs they need.

people’s experiences of programs including limited program offerings, inability to access programs, having to be on a waitlist to enroll. Incarcerated people also reported experiencing idle time and limited opportunities for recreation. The executive team reported that while enrollment in programs was at capacity, there was low attendance in vocational programs.

Washington offers a wide range of academic, vocational, and other programs outlined in Table 4. In order to accommodate additional programs in the classroom space available, the facility operates a “late evening” module from 7:00–8:45pm. College classes, Alcoholics Anonymous, and religious services operate during the late evening module, leaving more classroom space available during the other three modules.

In addition to the program offerings listed below, Washington was at the time of CANY’s monitoring visit preparing to launch a Horse Handling and Care program in partnership with the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation on 100 acres of farmland across from the facility. The program will eventually accommodate up to 40 participants, each assigned to a different horse. Renovation to the barn was slated for Spring of 2024 and the facility planned to launch the program with five horses before slowly expanding to full capacity.

Table 5. Academic and Vocational Programs Listed by the Washington Executive Team

Vocational				
Program	Capacity per module ¹	Morning Module Enrollment	Afternoon Module Enrollment	Notes
Building Maintenance	0	0	0	The instructor was on long-term sick leave with an anticipated return date in late April.
Computer Operator	19	3	4	Enrollment numbers were low because this was a new program. There was no waitlist.
Custodial Maintenance	14	14	12	
Electrical	18	15	13	
Horticulture	13	6	6	There were plans to decrease capacity to approximately 8 because of space limitations in the greenhouse.
Small Engine Repair	12	10	10	
Welding	14	13	14	
Industry				
Recycling	3	2	2	There were up to three full-time positions and four half-time positions for incarcerated participants, which were filled.
Academic ²				
Program	Capacity per module ¹	Morning Module Enrollment	Afternoon Module Enrollment	Notes
Multilevel	13	11	N/A	

Adult Basic Education 1	13	10	N/A	
Adult Basic Education 2	13	12	13	
Adult Basic Education 4	13	N/A	11	
Adult Basic Education 5	13	13	N/A	
Pre-High School Equivalency	14	12	11 and 12	Two cohorts in afternoon module
High School Equivalency	13	N/A	11	
English as a Second Language	13	9	N/A	
Special Education				Special education services are available to the population 21 years of age and under. They are also assigned a school psychologist, social worker, and school counselor that provide academic and reentry support.
College Program				SUNY Adirondack Community College had 27 students enrolled at the time of CANY's visit. The college provides a one-year certificate and an associate degree program. Another 20 people had expressed interest in enrolling in the fall semester following two recent information sessions.

Source: The information in this table was compiled from CANY representative notes from the initial meeting with the executive team and program areas walkthrough on March 26-27, 2024.

[1] A module refers to a scheduling block. Typically, DOCCS programs run during a morning “module” or afternoon “module.” Washington CF runs four modules including evening and late evening modules.

[2] For more information about Academic education program policies, see DOCCS Directive 4804. NYS Department of Correction and Community Supervision. (2024). Academic Education Program Policies, available here: <https://doccs.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2024/05/4804.pdf>

Other Programs	
Re-entry	Transitional services program (Phases I, II & III)
	Reentry resource center: Reentry materials are available in the orientation room.
	Non-driver ID: All individuals are issued non-driver ID cards prior to release through a partnership with the Department of Motor Vehicles. The program began approximately three months prior to CANY's visit.
	Under 21 population: Individuals under 21 years of age receive additional support to prepare for release including being assigned an Offender Rehabilitation Counselor (ORC) and working with a social worker and school psychologist.
Volunteer-Led Programs	Canine Training Program: The facility had five dogs and nine participants at the time of CANY's visit. Participants complete a 12-week program which provides instruction and support for training a dog from a local animal shelter. The dogs are then adopted by members of the community. The program started at Washington in May 2023.
	Alliance for Positive Health: The Alliance offers preventative education and support for HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, and sexually transmitted infections.

The following descriptions include additional details provided by staff and observed during a walkthrough of program areas and by the executive team.

General Library. The executive team reported that the new general librarian had established interactive activities including a weekly newsletter, writing competitions, and regular reading themes. When CANY representatives spoke with the librarian, they learned she was Washington's fifth librarian in four years. She was taking the initiative to make library activities relevant to the population, including planning to feature poems and other works written by incarcerated people in the newsletter and acquiring a book about horse care in anticipation of the thoroughbred program. She mentioned that library utilization had been low thus far in her time at Washington and she was trying to increase engagement. CANY representatives learned during the visit that interested individuals must request library access and wait for a "callout" (a list of people to be called for movement to a particular program area). Library hours are limited and people enrolled in programs during the library's open hours must request that materials be sent to their dorm.

College. SUNY Adirondack Community College operates in a dedicated classroom painted and decorated with school colors and decals. The classroom has a computer lab with 20 workstations provided by SUNY.

Recycling. Participants in the recycling industry program recycle state-issued green uniforms and cardboard. Uniforms are made into textile rags or reused. Washington must collect 40,000 pounds of cardboard in order to sell it on the market. Washington also maintains a composting operation which is staffed by incarcerated individuals with an outside clearance designation.²³ The executive team reported that outside crews are often shut down due to staffing shortages; they are the first area to be closed. During those times, facility maintenance staff handle the composting.

Horticulture. CANY representatives observed a pleasant environment in the horticulture greenhouse. Participants were separating marigold seedlings to replant. One individual described the program as a "great escape" and a "very calming, a breath of fresh air" in contrast to the dormitory. One individual mentioned that he had plans to start a garden upon returning home and that his mother had already bought him seeds. The horticulture instructor explained that the curriculum is aligned with Department of Labor occupational standards and that participants tend to stay in the program beyond the required six months, between 8 and 12 months typically, to obtain a more complete experience growing seasonal crops. Flowers grown in the greenhouse are sent to other state facilities. Participants were also growing fruits and vegetables including tomatoes and pineapples.

Special events. The executive team reported that Washington hosts numerous special events. They were preparing for a children's event in October in partnership with Osborne Association, during which primary caretakers would be able to spend the day in the surrounding area while

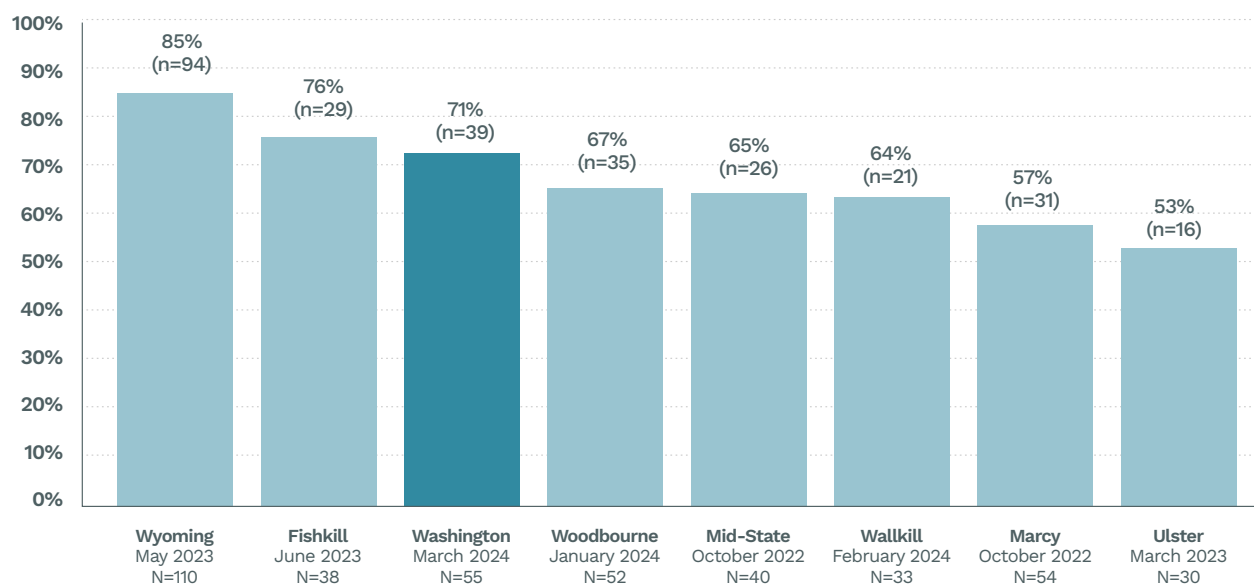
23 NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision. (2020, August 21). Guidance and Counseling Services (DOCCS Directive 4401). <https://doccs.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/11/4401.pdf>

their children visited their parent or family member at the prison. They were considering a Halloween theme and incorporating dogs from the canine program into the on-site activities.

Figure 8. Reports of Access to Academic and Vocational Programs

The proportion of respondents at [Washington](#) who reported being able to enroll in the academic and vocational programs is higher than in most other prisons in the sample.

- % of respondents in GP units who reported having access to or being able to enroll in the academic and vocational programs they need



- **Notes:** Excludes "N/A" responses. CANY asked "Are you able to enroll in the academic and vocational programs you need?" at Woodbourne, Wallkill, and Washington and "Do you have access to the academic and vocational programs you need?" at all other prisons in the sample.

Of the 46 respondents who elaborated on their experiences with programs, perspectives were mixed; slightly more respondents cited satisfactory experiences with programs (21 instances) and slightly fewer respondents citing unsatisfactory experiences with programs (17 instances). Some respondents describing unsatisfactory experiences reported having to wait to enroll in programs and experiencing idle time. Respondents also reported problems with recreation, mentioned in 19 instances, including not being offered recreation.

Satisfactory experience with programs

In the 21 instances citing satisfactory experience with programs, some respondents pointed to specific programs or program types they found valuable as well as staff that they appreciated. Some respondents reported positive experiences in vocational programs (4 instances), including one individual who expressed interest in pursuing underwater welding as a career post-release after completing the welding program. Others described having positive

experiences with different academic programs (4 instances) including ABE, HSE, and college programs. However, one of these individuals qualified his experience, reporting that college classes are often delayed or canceled because of a lack of staff to facilitate movement to the program. Some respondents reported positive experiences in the Alcohol and Substance Abuse Treatment (ASAT) program (3 instances), including one individual who described his impression that the program provides a supportive community. Respondents also described positive experiences in the Aggression Replacement Training (ART) program (2 instances). Lastly, respondents reported positive experiences with programming and guidance staff; two respondents praised their teachers' instruction and one respondent cited that ORCs make themselves accessible by regularly visiting the dorms.

Unsatisfactory experience with programs

In the 17 instances citing unsatisfactory experience with programs, respondents spoke of limited program offerings (7 instances), program access issues (7 instances), and their perception that vocational programs were teaching outdated skills (3 instances). A few respondents reporting limited program offerings conveyed the sentiment that there is a lack of “real” programming at Washington, including limited opportunities for rehabilitation and a lack of incentives that would help an individual earn earlier release. One individual characterized the situation by saying, “[there] needs to be more...positive activities and opportunities for self-help,” and that his experience of incarceration is “mentally draining [because there is] no rehabilitation.”

Some respondents described issues accessing programs across a wide spectrum of reasons. A few respondents cited staffing shortages affecting movement which leads to program delays and cancellations. In other instances, respondents reported that staff interfered with program access. One respondent cited a pattern of discrimination against people of color participating in ART who are sent back to their dorms for minor rule violations. Another respondent mentioned that a rule stating that students must be without a disciplinary ticket for six months to enroll in college “holds more people back,” describing how a correction officer could be having a bad day and write someone a ticket that will then prevent them from enrolling in college. Others mentioned being removed from ASAT for a drug-related infraction, including one individual who stated that he was perceived by staff to be under the influence of drugs when on his MAT medication and subsequently removed from the program. One respondent expressed being afraid to enroll in programs following a violent incident with a staff member. Lastly, one respondent cited being ineligible for the canine training program due to the nature of his crime.

A few respondents asserted that the vocational programs teach outdated skills. Two individuals with experience in the small engine repair program described the program as obsolete and recommended the facility focus on programming incorporating computer technology, business, and entrepreneurship.

During a meeting with Offender Rehabilitation Coordinators (ORC), ORCs discussed challenges providing programming in the SHU and GPC consistent with new requirements under the HALT law. They explained that most incarcerated individuals decline the opportunity to attend programs, and that in addition to facilitating discussions, ORCs frequently assign worksheets. One reason they suggested that people decline programming is that they cannot claim credit towards mandated programs for programming completed in disciplinary units and therefore do not view it as beneficial.

Program enrollment

When expanding on their experience with programs, 45% (19/45) of respondents reported that they were waiting to enroll in programs. Nine respondents specified that they were waiting to enroll in academic and vocational programs, while 11 respondents specified that they were waiting to enroll in mandatory programs. These numbers include some respondents who were waiting for both types of programs. Some respondents emphasized the length of time they had been waiting (6 instances), and of those instances, five cited having been told or perceiving that the facility was not prioritizing their program enrollment. Some respondents reported that they had been told they would be enrolled in programs closer to their release date. One respondent reported that he had a merit board date scheduled for November (eight months from then) and that he still needed to enroll in a vocational program as well as ASAT and ART.

While respondents frequently reported having to wait to enroll in programs, CANY representatives observed attendance issues in mandatory programs that were fully enrolled. On the day of CANY's visit, representatives observed low attendance in vocational programs during the morning module: two (2/13) participants were observed in Welding, four (4/15) in Electrical, two (2/10) in Small Engine Repair, and three (3/6) in Horticulture. Out of four participants enrolled in the recycling industry program, only one attended the morning module. The Deputy Superintendent of Programs and Vocational Supervisor described having fewer tools for ensuring program attendance following the HALT law now that a misbehavior ticket for nonattendance can no longer result in SHU time. Lack of consequences, from their perspective, meant that people frequently miss class and are taking up a program slot that another individual could benefit from. The executive team described trying to increase program participation by distributing college students throughout the dorms in hopes that they would be positive role models and demonstrate the value of continuing one's education.

ILC and IGRC members also raised concerns about people being enrolled in programs late and not in time for their parole, merit, or conditional release hearings. ORCs reported that some people are not being enrolled in mandatory programs with enough time to complete them before their parole board hearings and that parole commissioners are aware of the issue. They offered two reasons why this sometimes occurs, stating that some people have short sentences and have limited time to complete programs and that others are required

to retake a program because of a “program regression,” for example an individual receiving a misbehavior report for a violent act and being required to retake Aggression Replacement Training (ART).

Idle time

Incarcerated people frequently reported experiencing idle time (17 instances), due to having completed all mandatory programs (“program satisfied”) and not having enough to do. One respondent mentioned that they were “program satisfied” and had written to the Program Committee to request additional programming and had not received a response. Another respondent reported being bored, describing how he spends his days reading, exercising, and cooking and wishing there was another program he could join. One respondent attributed excess idle time to his perception that there are few voluntary programs at Washington. Another respondent cited having lots of idle time, reporting that he had been without programming and work assignments for the past six months.

Limited recreation opportunities

Limited recreational opportunities and the resulting situation of being locked in for most of the day seemed to exacerbate issues of idle time caused by limited programming slots and opportunities. Many respondents brought up issues with recreation when asked about their overall experience at the facility (16 individuals).

ILC and IGRC members outlined the population’s concerns about limited recreation opportunities. They reported that recreation was typically being offered for one hour per day on weekdays and not at all on weekends, citing that there had been no recreation for the past three weekends.²⁴ They also reported frequent cancellations during the week and described being told by the administration that staffing shortages necessitate cancellations. They further reported that recreation was currently taking place indoors and that only ten individuals were allowed in the gym at one time. The date for opening outdoor recreation was being pushed back from April to May. Members also stated that when outdoor and indoor recreation are not offered, individuals may use the day room; however, they emphasized that exercise is not possible in the day room and highlighted the lack of overall space and outdoor access for 50 people living together in a dorm where “we’re breathing each other’s air all day.”

Of the 16 respondents who reported unsatisfactory experiences with recreation, nine cited staff shortages as the reason they were not offered recreation. One respondent reported being offered recreation on average two to three times per week but that, as of the day of CANY’s visit, they had not been offered recreation in four days. Another respondent

²⁴ According to DOCCS Directive 4009: Minimum Provisions for Health and Morale, “An incarcerated individual shall be permitted to exercise outside of their cell for at least one hour daily...such exercise shall be provided outdoors, weather permitting unless the size of the population or the physical plant of the facility renders such daily outdoor exercise unfeasible. If daily outdoor exercise is not feasible, outdoor exercise shall be provided at least once every other day. Indoor exercise shall be provided as a substitute on those days that outdoor exercise is not available. NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision. (2023, December 22). Minimum Provisions for Health and Morale (DOCCS Directive 4009). <https://doccs.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2024/11/4009.pdf>

highlighted that there is no recreation on weekends and on weekdays they are rarely offered recreation before 3:30pm.

Two respondents emphasized that Washington houses young people for whom recreation time might be especially important, describing that youth need opportunities for movement and exercise. Additionally, another respondent reported that in the absence of recreation, individuals are trying to exercise inside the dorm which causes tension with others who are trying to rest or focus. Two respondents mentioned the harmful effects of not having access to sunlight when recreation is canceled.

- ▶ "I wish we had more rec."
- ▶ "[Staff say,] 'you should be grateful you're getting one' [hour of recreation per day]."
- ▶ "To get AM or PM rec is like witnessing an eclipse."
- ▶ "[We] never get sunlight."

Staff-Incarcerated Individual Interactions

9 The proportion of respondents who reported seeing or experiencing verbal, physical, or sexual abuse by staff at Washington is higher than in most medium security prisons in the sample. This is supported by concerns expressed about staff seeming irritable and aggressive when interacting with incarcerated people. Reports of racialized abuse were higher than average compared to other prisons in the sample.

Members of the ILC and nearly a quarter (74%, 54/74) of respondents interviewed described Washington as a "hands-on facility," meaning that officers are aggressive and sometimes physically abusive. Incarcerated individuals expressed fear of assaults from staff in retaliation to perceived or actual slights and grievances.

The ILC expressed the belief that the psychological effects of doing a lot of overtime exacerbated the poor treatment from staff. It is tantamount to "throwing gasoline on the fire" of an already tense situation, they said.

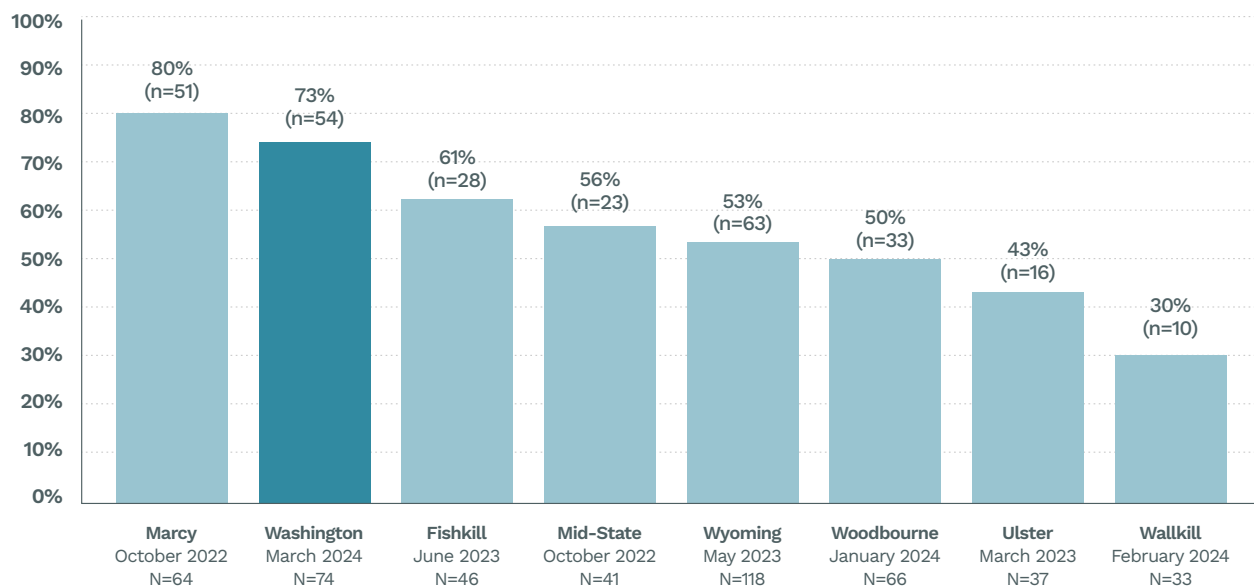
Mixed experiences with staff

Seventy-three percent (73%, 54/74) of respondents reported having seen or experienced verbal, physical, or sexual abuse by staff at Washington, which is the second highest compared to other medium-security facilities in the sample.

Figure 9. Reports of Abuse by Staff

The proportion of respondents at **Washington** who reported seeing or experiencing abuse by staff is the higher than most prisons in the sample.

- % of respondents in GP units who reported seeing or experiencing verbal, physical, or sexual abuse by staff at the prison



- **Notes:** CANY asked "Have you seen or been personally subject to verbal, physical, or sexual abuse by staff at this prison?" at Marcy and Mid-State and "Have you seen or experienced verbal, physical, or sexual abuse by staff at this prison?" at all other prisons in the sample.

Qualitative data provides further context to people's experiences of staff interactions in Washington. When asked to elaborate on their experiences with staff, 63 respondents described negative experiences, while 36 respondents described satisfactory or positive experiences. Many respondents reported allegations of physical abuse by staff (49 respondents). A smaller number reported allegations of verbal abuse by staff (26 respondents). Some reported retaliation by staff (9 respondents), and a few identified the stress of understaffing as a cause for staff abuse (5 respondents).

- "I witnessed COs kicking an incarcerated person in the face while he was having an asthma attack."
- "The CO's threaten retaliation and will beat or kill you."
- "No support for LGBTIQ community—derogatory terms by staff."
- "The shortage of staff is messing everything up. There's violence directed toward incarcerated individuals from the COs."

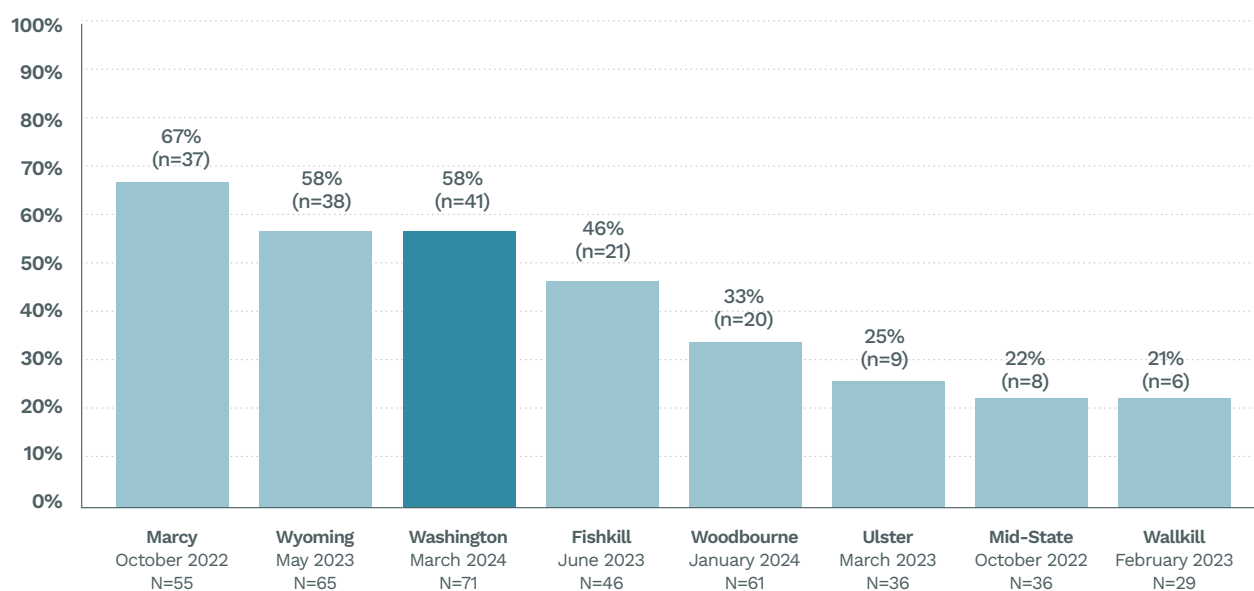
Racialized Abuse

Fifty-eight percent (58%, 41/71) of respondents reported having seen or experiencing racialized abuse by staff at Washington, which is the third highest compared to other medium-security facilities in the sample. Washington had a similar proportion of respondents who reported seeing or experiencing racial abuse by staff as Wyoming.

Figure 10. Reports of Racialized Abuse

The proportion of respondents at Washington who reported seeing or experiencing racial abuse by staff is the higher than in most other prisons in the sample.

► % of respondents in GP units who reported seeing or experiencing racialized abuse by staff at the prison



► **Notes:** CANY asked "Have you seen or been personally subject to racialized abuse by staff at this prison?" at Marcy and Mid-State and "Have you seen or experienced racialized abuse by staff at this prison?" at all other prisons in the sample.

One person said that "I've heard them [staff] use racial slurs and make other condescending remarks like calling people 'crackheads.'" Another said that he has heard the "N-word used frequently [and others] called a monkey, fag, and cocksucker." Another person qualifies that "some [staff] are racists. They beat people up, [I have] never experienced this at other prisons."

Grievances

10 The proportion of respondents in Washington who reported filing grievances is the lowest than at all other prisons in the sample. No respondents perceived the grievance process as fair.

DOCCS' latest semi-annual report, covering January through June 2023, showed that incarcerated people across the prison system filed 12,639 grievances. Of the 3,852 grievances filed in medium security facilities, 68 were filed in Washington. The grievances filed at Washington during this period were related to Program Services (n=8), Health Services (n=26), Facility Operations (n=9), Administrative Services (n=6), Counsel (n=1), and Executive Direction (n=18).

According to a recent CANY analysis of IGP data in 2022,²⁵ 99 grievances were filed at Washington, a rate of 143.3 per 1,000 incarcerated individuals. Washington ranked 22nd across all 26 medium security facilities in terms of the number of grievances filed. It is unclear whether this indicates that there are fewer grievable issues at Washington, or if this lower number indicates barriers to using the program. Washington had a 2% favorable resolution rate in 2022 compared to favorable resolution rates in other medium-security facilities which ranged from 34.3% to 0%.^{26, 27}

²⁵ To better understand and increase transparency around the IGP, CANY analyzed administrative data from DOCCS' public annual reports https://doccs.ny.gov/research-and-reports?keyword=%22grievance%20program%20annual%20report%22&created_date=2014-01-01&created_date_1=2024-01-01&page=0 on the IGP as well as grievance response time reports obtained through Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests. "Correctional Association of New York." Correctional Association of New York, 2014, www.correctionalassociation.org/grievance-data.

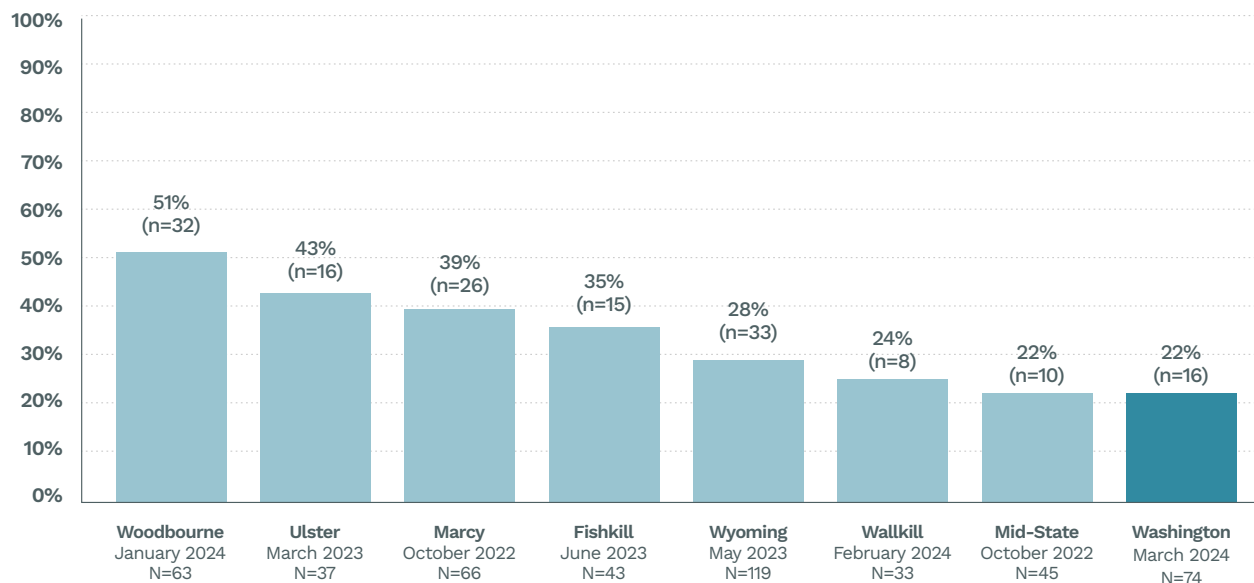
²⁶ "A grievance is favorably resolved if at least part of the grievance is decided in the incarcerated individual's favor by the superintendent or the Incarcerated Grievance Review Committee. See CANY's Analysis for further information. www.correctionalassociation.org/grievance-data.

²⁷ Findings from a Systemwide Survey of the Incarcerated Grievance Program "Smoke Screen": Experiences with the Incarcerated Grievance Program in New York State Prisons. 2023. https://correctionalassociation.org/s/CANY_GrievanceReport_2023Oct.pdf

Figure 11. Reports of Grievance System Usage

The proportion of respondents at [Washington](#) who reported filing a grievance is lower than at all other prisons in the sample.

► % of respondents in GP units who reported filing a grievance at the prison

**Scope of use**

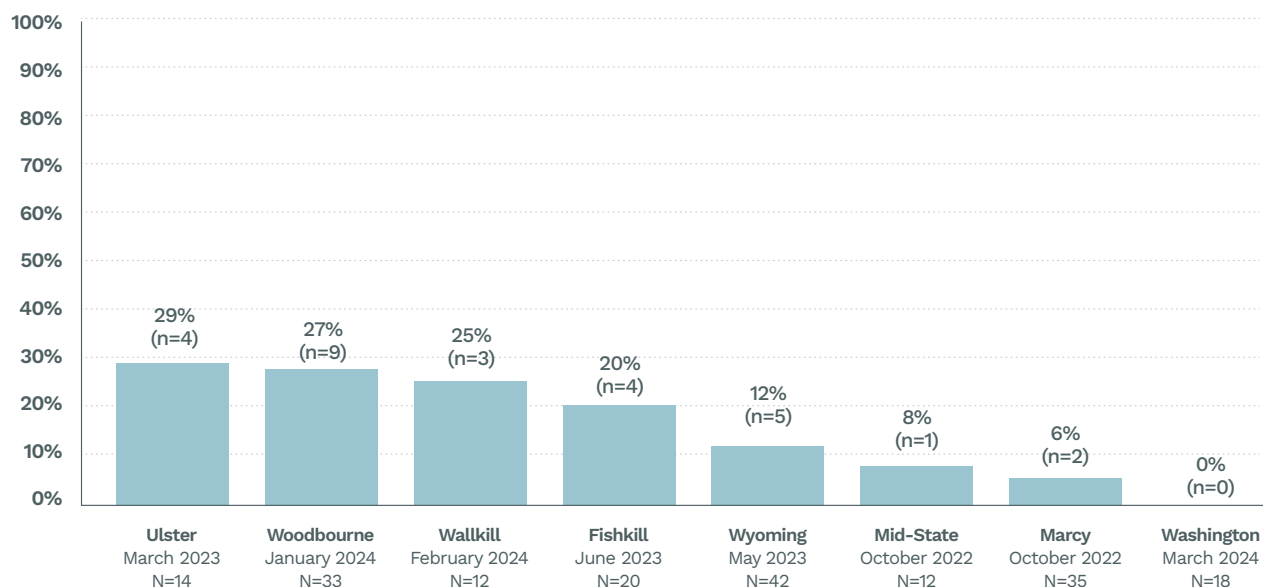
Of the 28 respondents who answered questions about the grievance process, 61% (17/28) reported unsatisfactory experiences. Twelve individuals reported avoiding the process altogether, while five reported filing a grievance. Thirty-two percent (32%, 9/28) of respondents cited a fear of retaliation as a reason for avoiding the grievance system. One individual stated, “I wouldn’t dare do that [file a grievance]” because he believed he would be taken to the draft room where he would be strip frisked, and assaulted. Another respondent said that people typically only filed as part of a group for protection or had their family call the facility.

- “It doesn’t really get you anywhere.”
- “Not going to go down that route. It’s pointless.”
- “File a grievance, now they on me.”
- “They tend to retaliate if you do, so I avoid it.”

Figure 12. Perception of the Grievance Process

Few respondents in medium security prisons characterized the grievance process as fair. The proportion of respondents at [Washington](#) who reported that the grievance process is fair is lowest among prisons in the sample.

► % of respondents in GP units who reported that the grievance process is fair



Procedural fairness

None of the 18 respondents believed that the grievance process was fair. This is the lowest share in the sample of medium security prisons. Fifteen respondents believed the process was illegitimate. One individual who had filed a grievance at Washington said, “They tell them to dismiss it,” referring to how grievances are handled. Another person said that correctional officers joke that there is no grievance system in Washington.

Discipline

11 The proportion of respondents in Washington who reported that the disciplinary system is fair is the highest among all prisons in the sample. Despite this, some respondents believed the disciplinary process in Washington to be biased.

At the time of CANY's visit, there were seven people in the SHU. The executive team reported that Washington has a very small SHU with a capacity of 12 beds. It does not have an RRU and has to transfer individuals to other facilities if their disciplinary sanction exceeds 15 days. The executive team noted that prior to CANY's visit, one or two individuals "had stayed past the 15 days . . . But that hasn't happened in the last two weeks." According to the executive team, individuals are offered three hours of program and one hour of recreation per day. CANY representatives did not see anyone in the yard while visiting the SHU recreation yard. Respondents reported that they are given a choice between recreation, programs, and access to the tablet. They opted to stay in their cells and use the tablet.

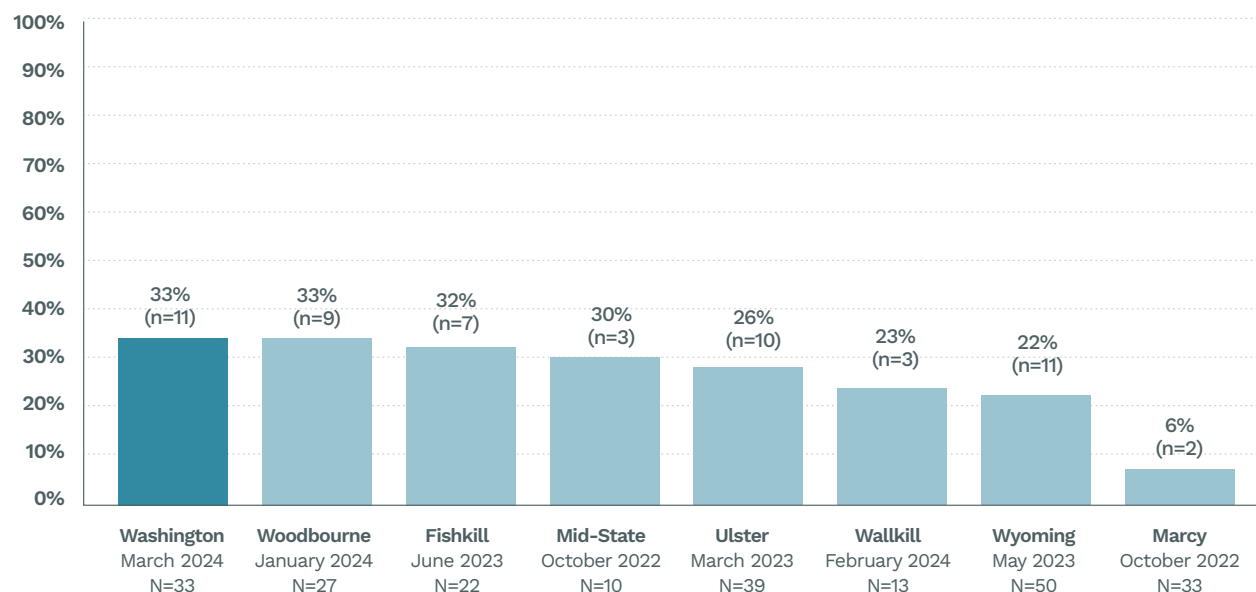
The CANY team walked through the GPC unit, which housed four people with a capacity of 12 beds. This unit was created after the passage of the HALT law to house individuals who meet specific criteria and cannot be placed in a SHU unit. These criteria include being under 21 or over 55 years old, or having a disability. These individuals are typically awaiting a disciplinary hearing or transfer to an RRU bed at another facility. At Washington, the GPC is also used for individuals requesting protective custody (PC) and those placed in involuntary protective custody (IPC). The executive team noted a need for a GPC as Washington has a higher share of people under 21. CANY representatives observed the GPC unit which was adjacent to the SHU. The executive team reported that people in the GPC have access to programs similar to those provided in the SHU.

Thirty-three percent (33%, 11/33) of respondents reported that they believe that the disciplinary system is fair at this prison, which, along with Woodbourne Correctional Facility, is the highest among all medium-security facilities in the sample. Nevertheless, concerns about coercion, false disciplinary tickets, and unauthorized sanctions by staff were raised by respondents.

Figure 15. Perceptions of the Disciplinary System

Few respondents in the medium security prisons characterized the disciplinary system as fair. The proportion of respondents at [Washington](#) who reported being subjected to disciplinary system is fair is the highest among all medium security prisons in the sample.

► % of respondents in GP who reported that disciplinary system is fair



Perception of fairness

When asked to elaborate on their experiences with the disciplinary system, 13 respondents described negative experiences, while six described satisfactory or positive experiences.

- One individual said, “It’s more reasonable here than at other places.”
- “Staff beat me up. Took me to medical and got them to write an intoxication ticket. It’s always a physical response.”
- “The hearing officer coerced me into agreeing to take a 15-day punishment by threatening to give me a stiffer punishment if I fought the charges. I took the 15 days.”
- “[I] got a ticket—my first in 8 years. That tells you something about [the] staff here. It doesn’t matter what you do, they get the nurses to write intoxication tickets.”

Others alleged informal, unauthorized punishments (8 individuals), such as confiscating an individual’s identification card and not returning it, which prevents people from leaving the housing unit for any reason, including attending medical appointments. “IDs are regularly taken by COs as a punishment because it’s required to do a lot of day-to-day things, like go to commissary, get packages, go to rec., mess hall, etc.”

While incarcerated individuals mentioned being issued misbehavior reports and sanctioned for intoxication, CANY's review of unusual incidents data (Table 3 above), shows that incidents in which drugs/alcohol were recovered are lower at Washington compared to systemwide. The monthly average incident rate per 1,000 incarcerated individuals on March 1, 2024, for drug/alcohol contraband was 0.4 compared to 1.8 systemwide.

Material Conditions and Environmental Issues

12 Several respondents alluded to infrastructure problems when highlighting concerns about the facility's drinking water and temperature controls. The share of respondents who report having clean drinking water and who characterized the facility's temperature control as adequate is lower than in most other prisons in the sample.

Washington Correctional Facility is comprised of 12 dorms and has the capacity to house 718 people. The facility borders Great Meadow Correctional Facility and shared a heating system with it at the time of CANY's visit.²⁸

In their initial meeting with CANY, the executive team reported two recent incidents that significantly impacted conditions at the facility. A boiler failure temporarily left the facility without central heating, prompting the executive team to procure portable heaters. There was also a water main break that disrupted the water supply for several days. During this period, Washington staff distributed bottled drinking water and slop buckets to incarcerated people. Incarcerated people discussed these incidents, as well as the administration's response, in meetings and in one-on-one interviews with CANY representatives.²⁹ They reported enduring unsanitary conditions after the boiler failure and the water main break, which fueled distrust in the facility's drinking water. Respondents also highlighted a lack of essential supplies needed to maintain both cleanliness in the dorms and personal hygiene.

Access to clean water

In one-on-one interviews, CANY representatives asked respondents about the availability of clean drinking water. Most respondents reported having access to clean drinking water outside of the commissary see (Figure 16). However, nearly a third of these respondents (29%, 14/49) qualified their responses by referring to previous plumbing issues, expressing skepticism, or describing additional precautionary measures such as boiling tap water.

²⁸ Great Meadow Correctional Facility closed in November 2024.

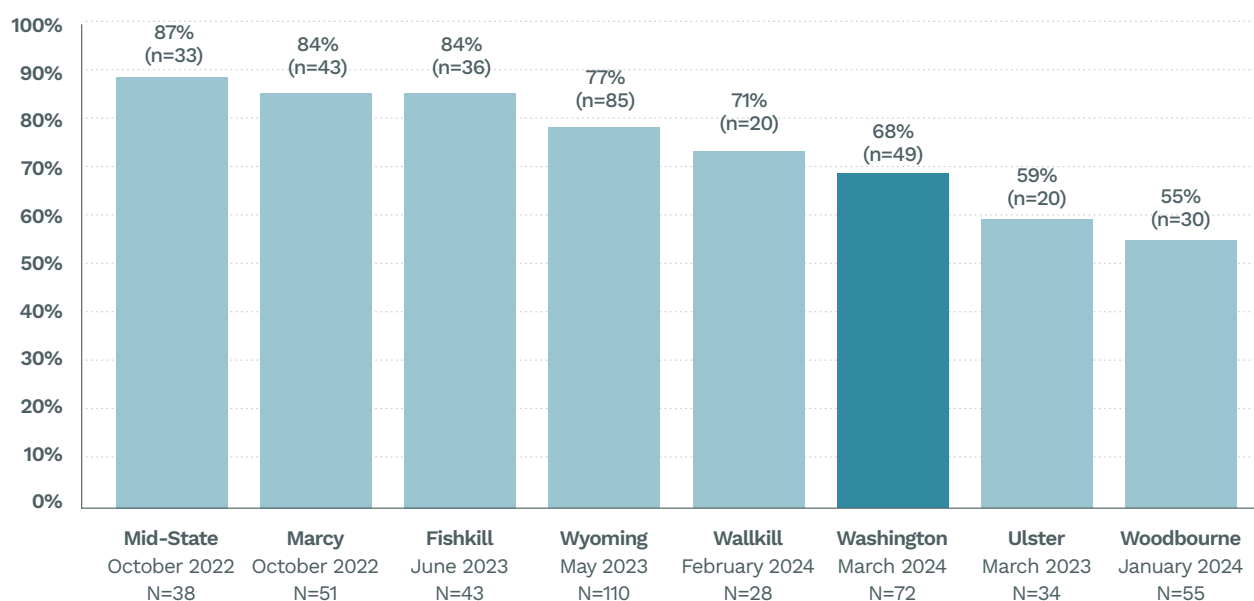
²⁹ In interviews, CANY representatives asked incarcerated individuals about the material and environmental conditions at the facility. Specifically, CANY representatives asked about the state of the drinking water, temperature controls, and living areas.

Roughly 40% of all respondents interviewed by CANY (38%, 31/82) expressed dissatisfaction with the facility’s drinking water. Most of these respondents (52%, 16/31) focused on issues with the facility’s pipes, indicating that they made people sick, led to unsanitary conditions, or fueled distrust in the facility’s water source. One of the respondents who alluded to the water main break stated, “I hope it’s clean. After it went down, everyone suffered stomach problems after it was ‘fixed.’”

Figure 16. Reports of Access to Clean Drinking Water

The proportion of respondents at [Washington](#) who reported having access to clean drinking water is lower than in most other prisons in the sample.

► % of respondents in GP units who reported having access to clean drinking water outside the commissary



CANY representatives visited Washington in March 2024, three months after the December 2023 water main break. This break left the facility without running water for four days.³⁰ Members of ILC and IGRC and three interview respondents reported that, while there was no running water, they had to use stationary receptacles in lieu of a toilet (presumably, staff would have had to do the same). Additionally, incarcerated people had to use trash bags to collect the waste and remove it from the unit. As one respondent noted, “A few days with no water. The toilet wasn’t working. Gave us bags instead, it was gross.”

Interview respondents and members of the ILC and IGRC noted that, even after water had been restored, they remained apprehensive about drinking it. They explained that staff emphasized the water was clean and posted water quality test results across the facility. However, the posted results offered little reassurance, as it was unclear whether they predated the water main break. CANY representatives observed a water testing report in one

30 This was reported by members of the ILC and IGRC.

of the housing units. The report was from 2023 but did not include an exact date. At the debrief meeting held one week after CANY's monitoring visit, the executive team reported that the water was tested three times before it was restored. At the same meeting, CANY recommended including dates on the water testing results posted throughout the facility.

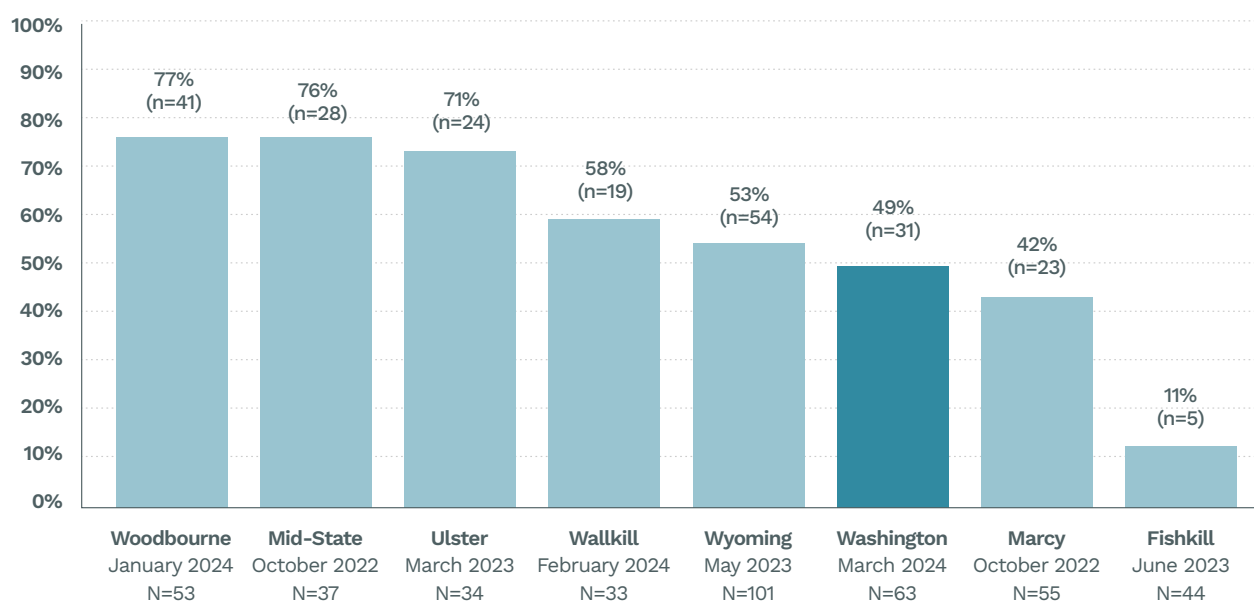
Temperature Control

Respondents had mixed assessments of the facility's temperature controls. When asked whether Washington has adequate temperature controls, 49% (31/63) of respondents answered "yes" and 51% (32/63) answered "no." However, most of the respondents who elaborated on the facility's indoor climate characterized it as uncomfortable (35 respondents), reporting that it is too hot during the summer (25 respondents). One respondent said the facility is "hotter than hell" in the summertime. Other respondents highlighted that issues with fans exacerbate the heat, pointing out that there are insufficient fans in the dorms or that staff had taken away people's fans citing security reasons (6 respondents).

Figure 17. Reports of Adequate Temperature Controls

The proportion of respondents at Washington who reported that the prison is equipped with adequate temperature controls water is lower than in most other prisons in the sample.

► % of respondents in GP units who reported having access to clean drinking water outside of the commissary



Members of the ILC and IGRC highlighted other concerns related to temperature control. They noted that the boilers failed in the wintertime on two separate occasions. During the most recent boiler failure, which occurred during a cold snap roughly one month prior to CANY's visit, the facility brought in industrial and commercial-grade portable heaters. Members of the ILC and IGRC noted that the portable heaters made the facility smell like exhaust fumes, prompting staff to measure the carbon dioxide levels throughout the facility.

Material Conditions

Thirty-two respondents discussed the material conditions of their housing units in their respective interviews. Most of them—81% (26/32)—confirmed that the equipment and fixtures in their living area worked properly. However, some respondents characterized the facility as dirty (7 respondents) and highlighted a dearth of cleaning supplies (6 respondents). Members of the ILC and IGRC echoed these concerns, stating that staff rarely distribute cleaning supplies.

ILC and IGRC members also raised concerns about the distribution of essential hygiene items, like toilet paper, toothbrushes, and bar soap. According to the directive, personal hygiene items should be “replenished on an as-needed basis; the frequency to be determined by a reasonable period of time for consumption of the item and subject to review by the Issuing Officer.”³¹ At Washington, incarcerated people reported receiving only one roll of toilet paper per week; bars of soap and a toothbrush are reissued once every two weeks. Members of the ILC and IGRC stressed that this schedule is inadequate, suggesting that it leads many people to rely on the commissary for essential items that the state should provide in sufficient quantities.

Conclusion

CANY extends appreciation to the executive team and staff of the NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, NYS Office of Mental Health, and incarcerated individuals for their knowledge and assistance in supporting our monitoring visit to Washington. This report was provided to DOCCS and OMH for a 60-day review period prior to publishing it to provide both agencies with an opportunity to respond. Following this review period, both the report and any responses are published together.

³¹ Department of Corrections and Community Supervision. (2023, December 22). Minimum Provisions for Health and Morale.” (4009). <https://doccs.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2023/12/4009.pdf>

CANY's oversight activities encompass in-person visits to state correctional facilities, surveys of incarcerated individuals, data analysis of administrative records, and confidential communication with incarcerated individuals through letters and phone calls. Based on its findings, CANY issues policy recommendations to the legislature and DOCCS. These recommendations and other CANY reports are publicly available on the CANY website: <https://www.correctionalassociation.org/recommendations>. To view other post-visit briefs, please visit CANY's reports page: <https://www.correctionalassociation.org/post-visit-briefings>.

Appendix A: Methodology

Throughout the visit, CANY representatives interviewed incarcerated individuals and held semi-structured informational meetings with (1) incarcerated individuals serving on various committees, (2) the facility's executive team, (3) union representatives, (4) medical staff, (5) mental health staff, and (6) ORCs. To supplement the information gathered through interviews and meetings, CANY representatives recorded notes ad hoc as they walked through the facility's housing units, as well as its medical, academic, and program areas. The sections below provide more detailed descriptions of CANY's methods.

Interviews

CANY representatives conducted one-on-one interviews with 88 incarcerated individuals at Washington: 83 in general population, 4 in the SHU, and 1 in GPC. CANY representatives also conducted one group interview with five incarcerated individuals.

CANY representatives interviewed respondents in general population units using a specific protocol, which includes closed- and open-ended questions spanning five topic areas: (1) medical and dental services, (2) mental health services, (3) programs and work, (4) treatment, grievances, and discipline, and (5) conditions at Washington which encompasses environmental conditions as well as basic services and entitlements (e.g., commissary, access to clean water, access to phones, etc.). The remainder of the interviews were conducted using a protocol designed for people in the SHU. This protocol includes open-ended questions spanning six topic areas: (1) admission to the SHU, (2) discipline within the SHU, (3) programs, recreation, and tablets, (4) medical, dental, and mental health services; (5) treatment in the SHU; and (6) awareness of HALT. The first and last questions in both protocol forms are open-ended, making it possible for incarcerated people to discuss experiences and concerns that might not have come up otherwise.³² Additionally, all protocols clarify that participation is voluntary and that respondents do not have to answer every question.³³

CANY representatives transcribed their interview notes in the week following the visit. Once the

³² All interview protocols contain open-ended questions. Responses to these questions are captured by CANY representatives, who take notes during each interview. These notes typically include a combination of direct quotes and paraphrase.

³³ Due to incarcerated people's preferences and the visit's time constraints, CANY representatives may not ask all the questions in a particular protocol form. For these reasons, the total number people who responded to a particular question does not always match the total number of respondents interviewed in general population or SHU units.

interview data was transcribed, CANY staff tabulated responses to closed-ended questions. To gauge whether the people's responses at Washington mirror those at other medium-security prisons, CANY compared close-ended responses collected on this visit to those collected on visits to other medium-security prisons conducted between October 2022 and February 2024, including Mid-State, Marcy, Ulster, Wyoming, Fishkill, Woodbourne, and Wallkill.³⁴

To identify prevalent themes, the open-ended interview data is coded using a combination of “top-down” and “bottom-up” approaches. Staff begin coding the data using a predetermined set of codes based on the topics outlined in CANY's protocol forms, as well as CANY's observations made at the facility. As staff conduct this initial round of coding, they keep notes to identify additional patterns that emerge from the interviews. Subsequently, staff re-code the data using the codes derived from the interviews. This report includes counts of individuals who addressed a particular theme or sub-theme in their interviews, as well as illustrative quotes.³⁵

Informational Meetings

CANY representatives held meetings with Washington's (1) ILC and IGRC, (2) executive team, (3) union representatives, (4) medical staff, (5) mental health staff, and (5) ORCs. Each of these meetings followed semi-structured interview guides, with questions tailored to each stakeholder group.

CANY representatives held two meetings with the executive team: an informational meeting at the start of the visit and a virtual debrief meeting one week later. At the debrief meeting, CANY representatives outlined and asked questions about their initial impressions of conditions at Washington. The issues CANY representatives raised at this meeting were issues that appeared to come up repeatedly during the visit or to be especially urgent and concerning, regardless of their prevalence. For a high-level summary of these issues see the “Impressions from Visit” section of this report.

CANY representatives transcribed their notes from each of the informational meetings. Staff reviewed these notes to gain a better understanding of the institution's policies, procedures, and practices, and major initiatives underway (e.g., capital projects).

³⁴ CANY visited Mid-State and Marcy in October 2022, Ulster in March 2023, Wyoming in May 2023, Fishkill in June 2023, Woodbourne in January 2024, and Washington in February 2024.

³⁵ A theme or sub-theme may come up repeatedly in a single interview, so the number of individuals who mention a particular issue does not always align with the number times that issue came up.

Appendix B: Snapshot of Demographic Data

Population Demographics as of March 1, 2024 | Washington Correctional Facility

Systemwide Population 32538
Washington 600

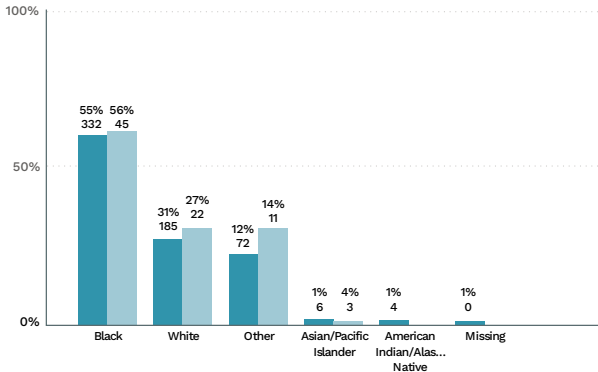


Population Demographics as of March 1, 2024 | Washington Correctional Facility

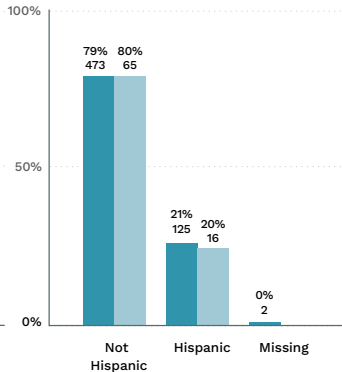
Washington Population	Interview Sample
600	81

● Washington ● Incarcerated People Interviewed by CANY (valid DINS only)

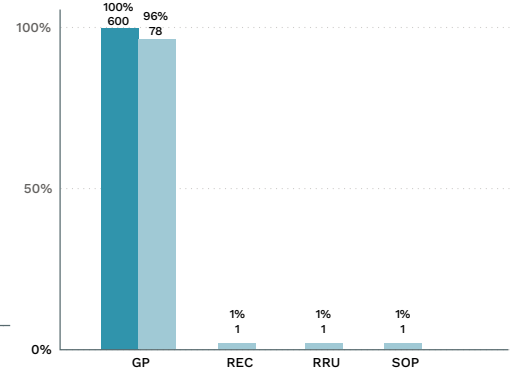
Distribution by Race



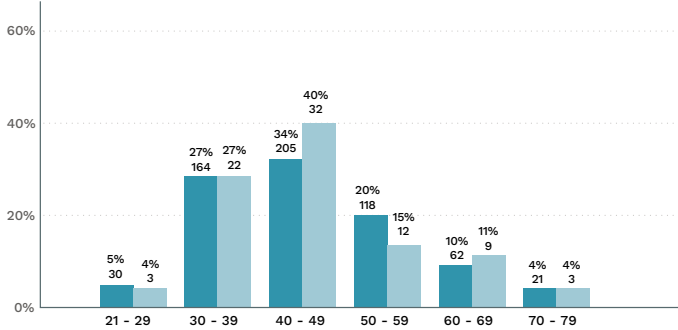
Distribution by Ethnicity



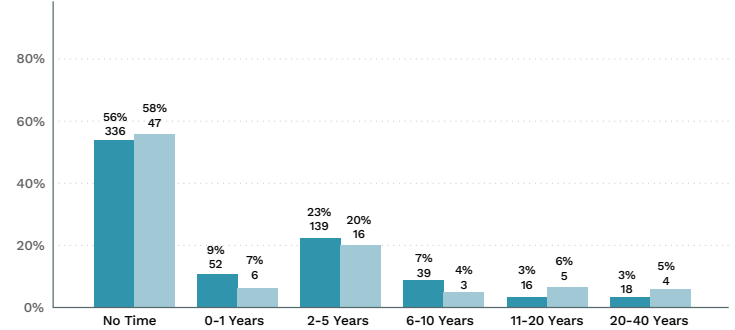
Distribution by Unit/Building Code



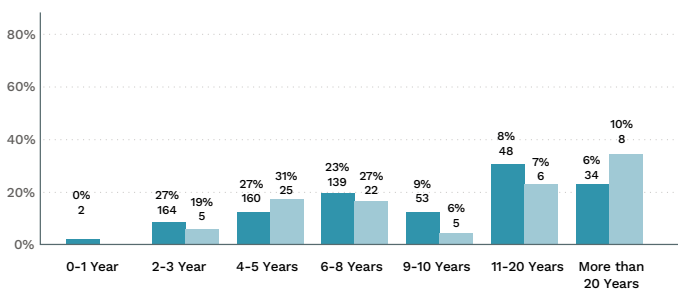
Distribution by Age



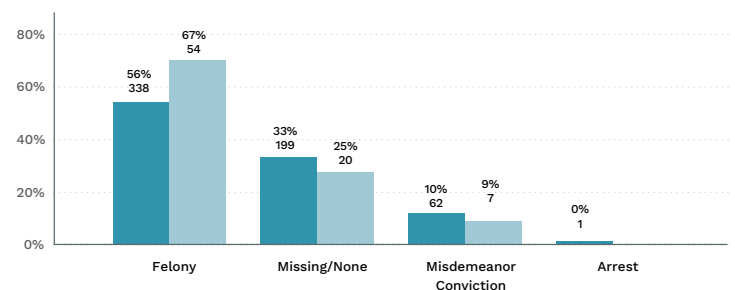
Distribution by Minimum Sentence



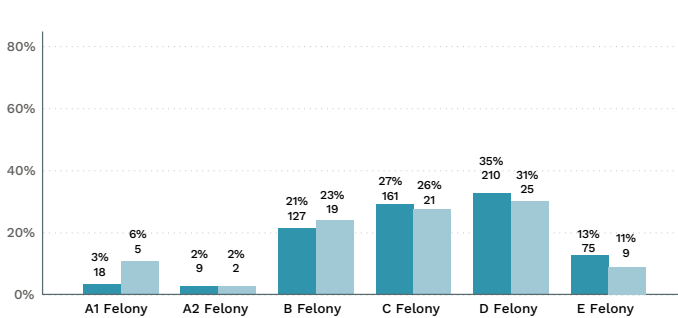
Distribution by Maximum Sentence



Distribution by Most Serious Prior Offense

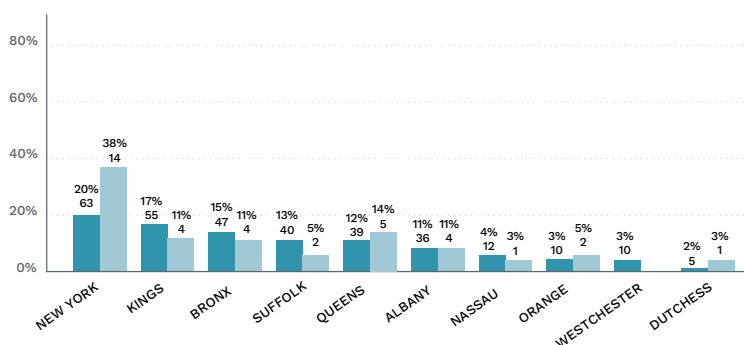


Distribution by Crime Class



Distribution by Commitment County (Most Serious Offense)

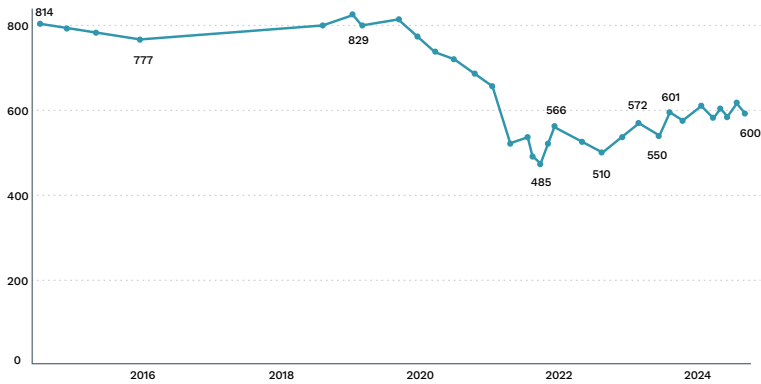
Includes only top 10 commitment counties amount incarcerated people at Washington



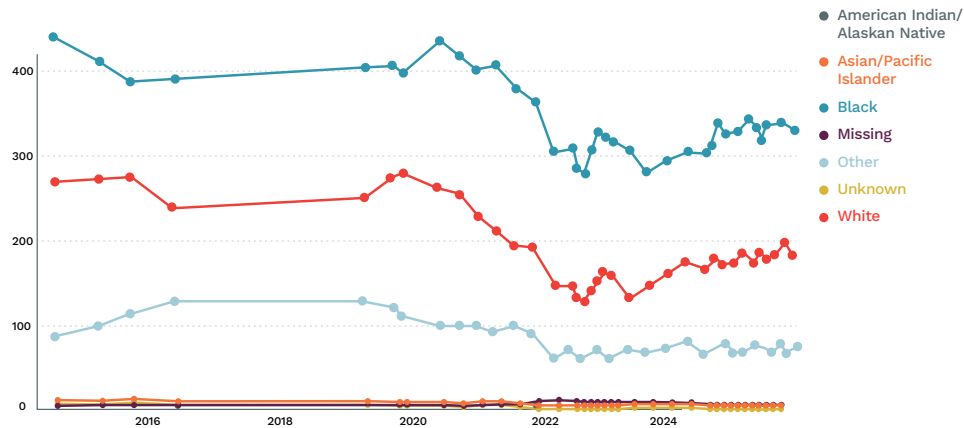
Population Demographics as of March 1, 2024 | Washington Correctional Facility

Facility Population Over Time

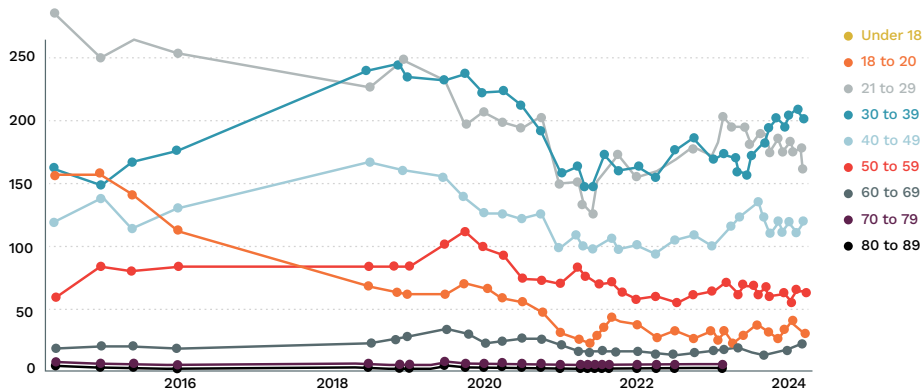
Units names are taken from DOCCS' under custody data, which does not include an exhaustive list of units at the facility. DOCCS' under custody data for Washington only includes general population unit names.



Facility Population Over Time by Race



Facility Population Over Time by Age Range



Appendix C: Data Addenda

Washington General Population Quantitative Data Addendum

Table 1. Responses to Yes/No Questions

Issue Area	Question	Yes		No		Total	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Basic Provision of Services	Is the commissary adequately stocked with items on a regular basis?	22	30%	51	70%	73	100%
	Are you able to access items from packages in a timely manner?	21	32%	45	68%	66	100%
	Are you receiving three meals per day in adequate portions?	52	74%	18	26%	70	100%
	Are you able to make phone calls, either by using the phones or through a tablet?	67	93%	5	7%	72	100%
	Do you have access to in-person visits?	58	81%	14	19%	72	100%
Healthcare	If you requested medical care, have you received a response?	34	65%	18	35%	52	100%
	If you requested dental care, have you received a response?	28	64%	16	36%	44	100%
	Do you have unaddressed medical or dental needs?	33	57%	25	43%	58	100%
	Have you experienced or witnessed an emergency medical or mental health situation in this prison?	39	59%	27	41%	66	100%
Mental Health Care	Are you on the OMH caseload?	23	32%	49	68%	72	100%
	Have you attempted to hurt yourself in this prison?	0	0%	53	100%	53	100%
Staff-Incarcerated Individual Interaction	Have you seen or experienced verbal, physical, or sexual abuse by staff at this prison?	54	73%	20	27%	74	100%
	Have you seen or experienced racialized abuse by staff (slurs, stereotyping, discrimination, etc.) at this prison?	41	58%	30	42%	71	100%
Grievance	Have you filed a grievance at this prison?	16	22%	58	78%	74	100%
	Is the grievance process fair?	0%	0%	18	100%	18	100%
Discipline	Have you been subject to discipline at this prison?	27	39%	43	61%	70	100%
	Is the disciplinary system fair?	11	33%	22	67%	33	100%
	Have you ever been locked inside your cell for more than 17 hours a day?	6	15%	34	85%	40	100%

Issue Area	Question	Yes		No		Total	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Material Conditions and Environmental Issues	Do you have clean drinking water outside of the commissary?	49	68%	23	32%	72	100%
	Does this prison have adequate temperature controls for each season (i.e., cooling in the summer, heat in the winter)?	31	49%	32	51%	63	100%

Table 2. Responses to Yes/No/Not Applicable Questions

Issue Area	Question	Yes		No		N/A		Total	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Health Care	If you received medical care, was the level of care adequate?	18	58%	11	35%	2	6%	31	100%
	If you received dental care, was the level of care adequate?	11	42%	10	38%	5	19%	26	100%
	Are you receiving medication as prescribed, including schedule and dosage?	27	45%	15	25%	18	30%	60	100%
Mental Health Care	Are you getting the mental health programs you need?	15	27%	17	31%	23	42%	55	100%
Programming and Recreation	Are you able to enroll in the academic and vocational programs you need?	39	59%	16	24%	11	17%	66	100%

Table 3. Responses to Yes/No/Not Applicable Questions

Question	2 days		1 week		2 weeks		1 month		> 1 month		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
If no, how long has your medical request been outstanding?	0	0%	2	15%	6	46%	1	8%	4	31%	13	100%
If yes, how long did it take to get medical care?	9	36%	6	24%	3	12%	4	16%	3	12%	25	100%
If no, how long has your dental request been outstanding?	0	0%	0	0%	2	20%	2	20%	6	60%	10	100%
If yes, how long did it take to get dental care?	1	9%	0	0%	4	36%	0	0%	6	55%	11	100%

Table 4. Responses to Question About Timeliness of Grievance System

Question	2 days		1 week		2 weeks		1 month		> 1 month		No Response		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
If you filed a grievance at this prison, how long did it take to get a response?	1	8%	2	15%	3	23%	2	15%	0	0%	5	39%	13	100%

Washington Special Housing Unit and General Population Confined Quantitative Data Addendum**Table 1.** Responses to Yes/No Questions

Question	Yes		No		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Have you been in a SHU or other form of segregated confinement for longer than 15 consecutive days?	0	0%	5	100%	5	100%
Are you in this unit because of a disciplinary sentence?	3	100%	0	0%	3	100%
Have you been in a SHU or other form of segregated confinement for a total of more than 20 days in the last 60 days?	1	25%	3	75%	4	100%
Were you medically evaluated on arrival?	4	80%	1	20%	5	100%
Did you receive a suicide prevention screening on arrival?	5	100%	0	0%	5	100%
Did you receive clean clothing on arrival?	5	100%	0	0%	5	100%
Did you undergo a mental health assessment within one day of your arrival?	2	40%	3	60%	5	100%
Did you have a hearing where you were sentenced to this current bid in the SHU?	4	80%	1	20%	5	100%
Were you told that you could have representation at your hearing by an attorney, paralegal, law student, or fellow incarcerated person?	4	100%	0	0%	4	100%
Were you provided an opportunity to make a phone call to your family or an attorney, or to speak to a fellow incarcerated person, to request such representation?	3	75%	1	25%	4	100%
Have you received additional disciplinary tickets while in the SHU?	0	0%	5	100%	5	100%
Have you received additional disciplinary confinement time and/or additional punishment in the SHU? (e.g., loss of privileges)	0	0%	4	100%	4	100%
Do you have at least three hours of out of cell programming per day? (Can include individual or group programming)	0	0%	5	100%	5	100%
Do you have at least one hour of out of cell congregational recreation per day (i.e., with other incarcerated people)	2	40%	3	60%	5	100%
Are you able to access phone calls, either through the tablet or other means while in the SHU?	5	100%	0	0%	5	100%
If you received medical care, was the level of care adequate?	0	0%	2	100%	2	100%
If you received dental care, was the level of care adequate?	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Do you have unaddressed medical or dental needs?	2	67%	1	33%	3	100%
Are you on the OMH caseload?	0	0%	4	100%	4	100%
Are you getting the mental health programs and services you need?	0	0%	1	100%	1	100%

Question	Yes		No		Total	
Do you have any unaddressed mental health needs?	1	100%	0	0%	1	100%
Have you attempted to hurt yourself in this prison?	0	0%	3	100%	3	100%
Have you seen or experienced verbal, physical, or sexual abuse by staff in the SHU?	1	25%	3	75%	4	100%
Have you seen or experienced racialized abuse by staff (slurs, stereotyping, discrimination, etc.) in the SHU?	1	25%	3	75%	4	100%
Have you heard about the HALT Solitary Confinement Act?	4	80%	1	20%	5	100%

Table 2. Responses to Yes/No/Not Applicable Questions

Question	Yes		No		N/A		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
If you have requested medical care, have you received a response?	2	50%	0	0%	2	50%	4	100%
If you have requested dental care, have you received a response?	0	0%	0	0%	4	100%	4	100%

Table 3. Responses to Question About Timing of Hearing

Question	Before		After		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
If yes, did that hearing happen before or after you were placed in SHU?	1	20%	4	80%	5	100%

Table 4. Responses to Question About Other Disciplinary Units

Question	Residential Rehabilitation Units (RRU)	Protective custody	Administrative segregation	Keeplock	Longterm keeplock	Step-down program	Mental health or other alternative to solitary
Besides the SHU unit at Woodbourne, have you been in any other disciplinary units here or at other prisons? (If yes, choose all that apply from the following):	0	0	0	3	2	0	0

*Respondents could select more than one option

Table 5. Responses to Question About Special Populations

Question	21 and younger	55 and older	Pregnant	Postpartum	With a mental health need	With a disability
Are you a member of any of the following populations? (Check all that apply)	0	1	0	0	0	1

***Respondents could select more than one option**

Table 6. Responses to Question About Use of Restraints During Programs

Question	Hand shackles	Ankle shackles	Cages	RESTART chairs	Waist chains	No restraints
During programs, are any of these restraints used:	3	4	1	1	1	1

***Respondents could select more than one option**

Table 7. Responses to Question About Use of Restraints During Programs

Question	Male	Female	Gender non-conforming	Transgender male	Transgender female	Other
Please describe your gender identity (choose all that apply):	5	0	0	0	0	0

***Respondents could select more than one option**

Appendix D: DOCCS Response



Department of Corrections
and Community Supervision

KATHY HOCHUL

Governor

DANIEL F. MARTUSCELLO III

Commissioner

BACKGROUND

The Correctional Association of New York (CANY) is charged by law with visiting and examining the New York State correctional facilities to identify and report on prison conditions and the treatment of incarcerated individuals. This Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS or Department) memorandum, dated April 28, 2025, is in response to CANY's March 2024 visit to Washington Correctional Facility. DOCCS response is not point-by-point but focused on the more significant and global issues raised by CANY. Where appropriate, DOCCS has shared information from CANY's report with relevant stakeholders, including the Office of Special Investigations (OSI). While we appreciate the independent and transparent review conducted by CANY, we believe that the manner in which the data is being portrayed may be misleading and lead to incorrect conclusions. CANY interviewed a small fraction of the overall population at Washington (approx. 89 individuals) and extrapolates broad conclusions onto the overall facility based on this subset. While we believe in the seriousness of the issues raised, it is important to qualify data to ensure recommendations and next steps reflect the limitations of the data collected.

Washington Correctional Facility is a well-run medium-security facility, located in the Town of Fort Ann, in Washington County. Washington Correctional Facility is utilized for the general confinement of males 18 years of age or older and is also equipped with a Special Housing Unit (SHU). A new Executive team has been appointed since CANY's March 2024 visit, in connection with the 2024-2025 New York State budget authorizing closures of state correctional facilities.

BASIC PROVISION OF SERVICES

Issue(s) Identified: Incarcerated individuals expressed concerns related to limited and costly commissary provisions; water quality; package deliveries, limited access to phones, and nutritional quality.

Response: Commissary provides incarcerated individuals with the means to supplement the Department provided nutritional meals, clothing, and other provisions to maintain cleanliness, health, and morale. Commissary vendors are selected via a competitive bid process in compliance with New York State Finance Law. DOCCS is aware of the effects of inflation on commissary items. Unfortunately, commissary vendors have been subject to the same inflationary pressures and product availability issues that have impacted the global economy. In accordance with contracting requirements, as agency staff are notified of documented item price changes by the vendor (due to manufacturer increases, increased shipping/freight costs, etc.), it is incumbent upon staff to update our for-sale prices accordingly so that the Department is not selling items at a loss. When staff are notified of instances where items are no longer available, alternative vendors are sought for the specific items affected.

Staff at Washington Correctional Facility have recently reviewed their ordering process and have adjusted the minimum and maximum stock levels based upon sales to the population. This action has significantly improved product availability as evidenced by recent daily out-of-stock sheets. With regard to the amount of product allowed to purchase, limits are in place, in part due to limited storage space in the housing units. Incarcerated individuals at Washington Correctional Facility are supplied with an updated "out of stock" sheet daily. Any item listed on the "out of stock" sheet, per Department policy, is not allowed to be substituted after the incarcerated individual submits their buy sheet. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the individual to review the "out of stock" sheet before placing their commissary order. If an item is not listed on the "out of stock" sheet for any reason, the individual is afforded a substitute item.

The Department is working toward a Centralized Commissary Contract in which items for purchase would be standardized with consistent pricing statewide. The process will allow the individuals to place their order with the vendor, showing real-time inventory and pricing.

The drinking water system serving Washington Correctional Facility consists of a surface raw water source supply from Dolph Pond. There is a conventional water treatment system consisting of coagulation, static mixing, flocculation, clarification, filtration, disinfection and pumping. There are also two groundwater storage tanks to meet high water demands and fire flow. The water plant was rehabilitated in 2015, with repair of filter tanks, multi-media filtration, and numerous control and instrumentation upgrades. The drinking water plant operates in full compliance with New York Department of Health requirements, and the most recent Annual Water Quality Report showed no exceeding levels of contaminants, which is posted on the Department's website under Research and Reports.

Regarding food quality, the Department follows community food preparation standards for large groups of people in restaurants, hospitals, and other large institutions. The menus are designed to be objectively palatable, mindful of health risks, allergens, traditions and preferences for the general population. All food items and ingredients are sampled prior to being approved for purchase. The Nutritional Services team includes a Dietitian, the Director, and Assistant Directors, whose combined food service industry experience is adequate for gauging flavor profiles. The incarcerated population has opportunities to meaningfully engage by providing feedback. A food survey is filled out quarterly between the Food Service Administrator, ILC representatives, and the facility Superintendent. Once signed by all parties, the survey results are forwarded to the Correctional Food Nutritional Services Director. As an example, over the course of many years, the amount of textured soy protein in the Department's food products has been reduced due to trending concerns among the incarcerated population. Though the levels of soy used in Department recipes have always been determined to be healthy and appropriate per analysis by Registered Dietitians who utilize Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) guidelines.

Regarding package denials, Directive #4911, "Packages & Articles Sent to Facilities", outlines the procedures for processing, issuing, having item discrepancies reviewed and returning packages, as well as a listing of allowable items that can be received by incarcerated individuals through the package room. All unauthorized items are appropriately documented and returned. Any problems with the packages are referred to the appropriate vendor. Incarcerated individuals are encouraged to file a claim for any item(s) declared missing/damaged. Claims are then investigated, and the incarcerated

individuals are notified of the determination. In addition to filing a grievance, incarcerated individuals can lodge complaints with the area Sergeant.

Regarding phones, Washington Correctional Facility has 36 phones available for the incarcerated population. There are 2 phones per dorm, as well as 4 phones each in the Gym as well as the Yard. Washington Correctional Facility transitioned to the Unity platform (wi-fi tablets) in September 2024. This allows incarcerated individuals greater access to their family and friends via the tablet phone system. A review of the call records indicates the number of completed calls has increased by 50% and the number of completed call minutes has increased by 60% since these tablets have been rolled out.

PROGRAMMING

Issue(s) Identified: Incarcerated individuals expressed concerns related to program offerings, access, and idle time.

Response: Washington Correctional Facility offers a variety of programs and services for incarcerated individuals. Programs range from educational and vocational training to treatment and religious services. While DOCCS requires participation in academic and vocational programs, preference is given to those closest to their Earliest Release Date (ERD). Incarcerated individuals aged 21 and under are mandated for school placement. The Department implements a Master Job Organization Table Analysis (MJOTA), which determines if there are sufficient program items available at a facility and if they are being utilized in a manner to ensure appropriate programming for incarcerated individuals. While the Department makes every effort to assign programming, it also takes a proactive approach by utilizing the skills and resources available within the incarcerated population to minimize idle time.

Program curricula are updated as changes in the industry require our instructors to reassess. The Small Engine program is relevant as the skills and mechanical principals taught in the program align with equipment being used and sold in today's market. Every year, vocational programs are allotted funds for new updated tools, equipment, and materials as well as an opportunity to purchase new equipment through our Vocational Equipment Request fund so they can provide their program participants with the best opportunity to learn new skills on modern equipment. The Department also provides opportunities for incarcerated individuals to participate in Computer Operator, Computer Information Technology Support, and General Business classes in various facilities, as well as supporting the Secure Offender Network (SON) at wired facilities to offer access to certain certifications and programs where available. Many of our programs also offer modules that cover business and entrepreneurship aspects of the trade, including soft skills which provide training on how to be successful in the workplace.

Attendance rates for academic and vocational programming are being monitored by all staff and have recently improved. Staff are currently attempting to socialize incarcerated college students throughout the dorms to help bolster interest and motivation as potential role models while showing the value in one's education. Program attendance is mandatory, and absences are dealt with on an individual basis through the fair and impartial disciplinary system. Individuals are removed from substance-use

treatment services when they are deemed to have been under the influence, either via a misbehavior report or documentation by medical staff following an exam. The use of illicit substances places everyone in the facility in jeopardy and must be managed expeditiously. Participants are removed to protect the integrity of the setting and allow the program to be a safe place for its members to grow, share and evolve. Individuals are not removed due to their participation in the Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) program. Harm reduction concepts are included in the Department's Substance Abuse Treatment Services.

With additional staff absorbed from the consolidation, Washington Correctional Facility has been able to offer additional programming and work through waiting lists. Accessibility to Recreation has improved and many sports leagues are up and running again. The General Library has expanded their hours of operation to include two evening modules per week. With respect to Washington Correctional Facility lacking volunteer programs, the following volunteer opportunities are active: Alcoholics Anonymous, Alliance for Positive Health, Brooklyn Public Library – Remote, Canine Training, Catholic Bible Study, Bennington College, SUNY Adirondack, Jehovah's Witness, Reentry Works – Remote, Visitor Hospitality Center – Osborne Association, and Veteran's Services.¹

FACILITY OPERATIONS

Issue(s) Identified: Incarcerated individuals allege staff misconduct and retaliation; witnessing violence and low staffing levels.

Response: The Department takes great pride in the professionalism of its workforce. Our effectiveness and strength come from our adherence to the professional principles that we have come to operate under. Washington Correctional Facility is no exception. The Department has a zero-tolerance policy for violence or discrimination within our facilities. In response to the specific allegations noted in the CANY report, the Department's OSI has engaged CANY to gather information that will allow for objective and evidence-based investigation(s) into the allegations. If the investigations find that staff have acted unprofessionally, the Department is committed to holding individuals accountable.

The Body-Worn Camera (BWC) program is fully operational at Washington Correctional Facility. All staff assigned a BWC are required to activate their equipment and have it recording whenever they are in the presence of an incarcerated individual. All Supervisors diligently work to ensure that all staff have their BWC always powered on and activated when required. The Department has recently expanded Directive #4943 to require BWC activation whenever a staff member comes in contact with incarcerated individuals and has implement advanced performance matrix to allow for additional body-worn camera oversight, review and audit functionality. The Executive Teams are aggressively reviewing the BWC usage daily to ensure compliance with Department policy. Any potential violation of the policies is promptly referred to OSI, and when appropriate, the Bureau of Labor Relations (BLR). The Department is also advancing a facility-wide fixed camera project at Washington.

¹ Due to the recent job action, which resulted in the loss of many security staffing resources, all facilities experienced a disruption in their operations, to include program services. The Department is actively working on the safe reopening of all facilities operations.

Regarding reports of incarcerated individuals witnessing fights, the Department and the Washington Correctional Facility remain committed to reducing any and all violence. Several initiatives have already been employed, with continual evaluation of options to increase the safety for all. The current staffing shortages for law enforcement positions reach beyond the Washington Correctional Facility, the Department, and New York State to a national level. The Department has undertaken several initiatives to address the staffing shortages by contracting with third parties for a large-scale social media recruitment campaigns; establishing a Statewide Recruitment Unit; expanded the regional recruitment initiatives that promote direct placements; increased the starting salary for Correction Officers; launching an advanced placement initiative to attract applicants with Correction Officer experience; decentralizing the Correction Officer Training and Experience Examination to reduce the processing time; consolidating housing units; and closing two prisons in 2024 to bolster staffing levels at other facilities. The Department is currently engaged in an overall security staffing review to streamline operations and find efficiencies that includes engaging local stakeholders to be part of the process. In addition, to pursue candidates for civilian positions, recruiters have engaged jobseekers at career fairs and community events, and leveraged the resources available through the New York State HELPs program launched by the Department of Civil Service.

MEDICAL

Issues(s) Raised: Incarcerated individuals expressed concerns related to the quality of medical care, access, and professionalism.

Response: Definitions of what constitutes “satisfactory medical care” vary from person to person, making it difficult to ascertain and investigate generalized concerns about dissatisfaction with the quality of medical care provided. Specific details allow for further investigation into the complaint. Concerns about the attitude and demeanor of the medical staff should be addressed through the established processes at Washington Correctional Facility. Additionally, it should be noted that in accordance with the Department’s employee manual, all oral and written communication by employees to incarcerated individuals is to be accomplished in a professional, courteous and dignified manner. It is the expectation that all medical staff are in compliance with this code of conduct. Instances of specific, reported unprofessional behavior are thoroughly investigated.

Regarding the sick call process at Washington Correctional Facility, there is a sick call drop box on every housing unit. The slips are picked up every night by security, typically by 1:00 a.m. The night nurse triages all slips and schedules appointments based on medical priority. Not all sick call requests warrant an immediate appointment. Security staff deliver the lists to every dorm at 4:00 a.m. during the Watch Commander rounds. Sick call days at Washington Correctional Facility are routinely held on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, with adjustments made for holidays. Access to emergency medical care is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. If there is a complaint about an emergency issue, the night nurse informs the Watch C-commander or the Sergeant that the incarcerated patient must be brought to a medical clinic immediately for evaluation. With regard to the concerns related to emergency response, the healthcare and security staff in all facilities receive initial and ongoing training to respond to healthcare emergencies. Staff are trained on a variety of elements including, but not limited to, the recognition of signs and symptoms and knowledge of actions required

in potential emergencies; administration of first aid, CPR and AED; and administration of Narcan to unresponsive persons.

Washington Correctional Facility currently has a full-time Nurse Practitioner and a part-time Physician, with a vacancy open for a half-time physician vacancy. Regarding dental staffing, Washington Correctional Facility previously employed a part-time dentist without an assistant, which impacted the unit's ability to provide routine dental care. However, there is now a full-time dentist, a dental hygienist, and a dental assistant, resulting in the wait list being significantly reduced. Washington Correctional Facility does not currently have an on-site pharmacy. At the time of CANY's visit, medications were provided by Great Meadow Correctional Facility's onsite pharmacy, except for controlled substances (including MAT medications). Patient-specific controlled substances, including oral buprenorphine, are provided by a vendor pharmacy. Methadone is provided by the contracted Opioid Treatment Provider (OTP), and injectable buprenorphine is provided by SUNY Upstate. As Washington Correctional Facility did not have an on-site pharmacy in the past, at times, there may have been a short delay (1-2 days) in receiving newly ordered medication from the hub pharmacy, or vendor pharmacy. Washington Correctional Facility is in the process of Finalizing the set-up for their onsite pharmacy and expect that it will open and fully functional by the end of the week of April 21, 2025. Concerns regarding medications, including questions related to the route and/or timing of administration, can be addressed through the sick call process. The timeframe requirements for submitting refill requests are reviewed at facility orientation with each incarcerated individual. The expectation is that individuals will submit their refill requests within the specified timeframe to ensure refills are completed in a timely manner. Incarcerated individuals may request to be evaluated for the MAT therapy via a sick call process or during a clinical visit with their primary care provider. After discussion with the patient, the primary care provider determines which medication is prescribed for the treatment of an opioid use disorder. When a patient is persistently uncooperative with the treatment plan or is demonstrating risky behavior that can adversely affect the health and safety of others, injectable buprenorphine may be prescribed as an alternative treatment. Incarcerated individuals who feel they are experiencing harassment from staff due to their participation in the MAT program are encouraged to immediately report this using established reporting systems such as the Executive Team, and/or OSI.

MENTAL HEALTH

Issue(s) Identified: Incarcerated individuals and staff expressed concerns related to accessing mental health services.

Response: The Department has initiated multiple wellness initiatives for staff, including:

- Contracting with Desert Waters Correctional Outreach to offer trauma-informed care training: Improving the Well Being of Correction Professionals.
- Partnering with the National Suicide Awareness for Law Enforcement Officers Program (SAFLEO) to make available to all staff the Valor Law Enforcement Wellness program.
- Development of a Suicide Prevention Task Force involving various internal stakeholders as well as local county jails and national suicide prevention experts to look at our current suicide prevention initiatives as well as staff wellness efforts.

- The Department deploys a Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team to provide critical incident debriefing as needed alongside our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) in times of need.
- The Department also collaborates with other agencies such as the Veteran's Administration, Calm Seas Psychotherapy, New York State Trauma Informed Care Network, and Suicide Prevention Network of NY to explore mental health and wellness options. To note, Washington Correctional Facility is equipped with a "Wellness Room" that staff can use if they need a time-out after a critical incident

New initiatives that can benefit our staff are continuously being examined and offered to staff, such as evidence-based staff wellness interventions.

At the time of the CANY visit, Washington Correctional Facility was a level 3 mental health facility that offered mental health treatment on an outpatient basis to individuals in the general population with moderate mental health disorders. These individuals were deemed psychiatrically stable by the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) to function in such an environment. Incarcerated individuals who were deemed in need of a higher level of care, or who would benefit from additional mental health programming were transferred to other facilities that could meet their needs. The OMH Unit Chief at Great Meadow Correctional Facility had oversight of the mental health services at Washington Correctional Facility at that time. OMH staff were assigned on a part-time basis and additional staff provided coverage as needed with no lapses in services.

Since the CANY visit, Washington Correctional Facility was reclassified to become an OMH level 1 facility and is currently offering more mental health services and programming. This includes a new 50-bed Intermediate Care Program (ICP) program for incarcerated individuals who are considered Seriously Mentally Ill (SMI) and in need of more mental health services. Additionally, OMH staffing has increased to 14 full-time clinicians.

GRIEVANCES

Issue(s) Identified: Incarcerated individuals expressed concerns related to the grievance process, scope of use, and procedural fairness.

Response: The Incarcerated Individual Grievance Resolution Committee (IGRC) is composed of two voting incarcerated representatives, two appointed staff members, and a non-voting chairperson. The decision to find a grievance as favorable, unfavorable, or to dismiss it, lies solely with the IGRC. If an incarcerated individual disagrees with the recommendation of the IGRC, they can appeal the response to the Superintendent, and subsequently to the Central Office Review Committee (CORA). Similarly, if a grievant believes that the IGRC improperly dismissed and closed a complaint, they can appeal the dismissal to the Incarcerated Grievance Program (IGP) Supervisor for review. If the IGP Supervisor determines the dismissal was appropriate, the incarcerated individual may pursue a complaint that the IGP Supervisor failed to reinstate a dismissed grievance by filing a separate grievance.

It is important to note that grievance outcomes are based on the "Action Requested" by the incarcerated individual, not on the entire content of the grievance complaint itself. It is not uncommon for an incarcerated individual to indicate an "Action Requested" unrelated to the subject matter of the grievance complaint itself. For example, an incarcerated individual may lodge a grievance related to heat on the housing unit, but their Action Requested is for staff members to be fired. It is incumbent upon the incarcerated individual to ensure they are requesting meaningful, attainable action relevant to the matter they are grieving. The CANY post-visit brief reports that 17 out of 28 individuals who responded reported unsatisfactory experiences; however, only 5 filed a grievance. The report does not define how an individual could have an "unsatisfactory" experience or clarify the specific causes for the 12 individuals to avoid. This limited information does not provide a meaningful opportunity to evaluate whether the responses and/or answers being issued at Washington Correctional Facility are accurate and appropriate.

The incarcerated population at Washington Correctional Facility has shown a lack of interest in engaging in the IGRC elections for the past few years. The elections are scheduled every six (6) months and a memo requesting nominations is posted on all housing units. In addition, the IGP Supervisor has actively and continually tried to increase interest among the population in working in the IGRC office. As a result of the diminished interest, elections have not been conducted as the individuals who have expressed that they meet the eligibility requirements were placed into the IGRC Representative positions automatically. Effective January 15, 2025, standardized IGRC election procedures were implemented statewide, and new forms were developed to ensure uniformity across all facilities. The incarcerated population is provided sufficient advanced notification of when each scheduled election will be held, the process to request nomination, and the procedures for voting for eligible candidates. They are also provided notification of the election results.

Below is the grievance data for Washington Correctional Facility:

- For calendar year 2024, Washington Correctional Facility filed a total of 100 grievances
- 10 (10%) were informally resolved prior to an IGRC hearing being held.
- Of the 36 grievances heard by the IGRC, 4 (11.1%) were found favorable to the grievant,
- Of the 54 grievances answered by the Superintendent, 1 (1.9%) was found favorable to the grievant.
- The IGP Supervisor handled 103 non-calendared contacts.
- A total of 15 (15%) filed grievances were found favorable.
- When you include the 103 non-calendared contacts, the favorable resolution rate increases to 58.1%. This is consistent with the overall statewide grievances filed by type.

There has been no indication that the grievance program at Washington Correctional Facility is not operating in accordance with Directive #4040.

Conclusion

DOCCS appreciates all of CANY's feedback related to Washington Correctional Facility. This facility exemplifies how New York DOCCS stands out as a leader in the field of corrections. The Department

has taken affirmative steps to address the feedback provided. DOCCS will continue to work towards improving public safety by providing a continuity of appropriate treatment services in safe and secure facilities where all incarcerated individuals' needs are addressed, as they are prepared for release.

Monitoring Visit To

Washington Correctional Facility

Correctional Association of New York

Brooklyn, NY 11207

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