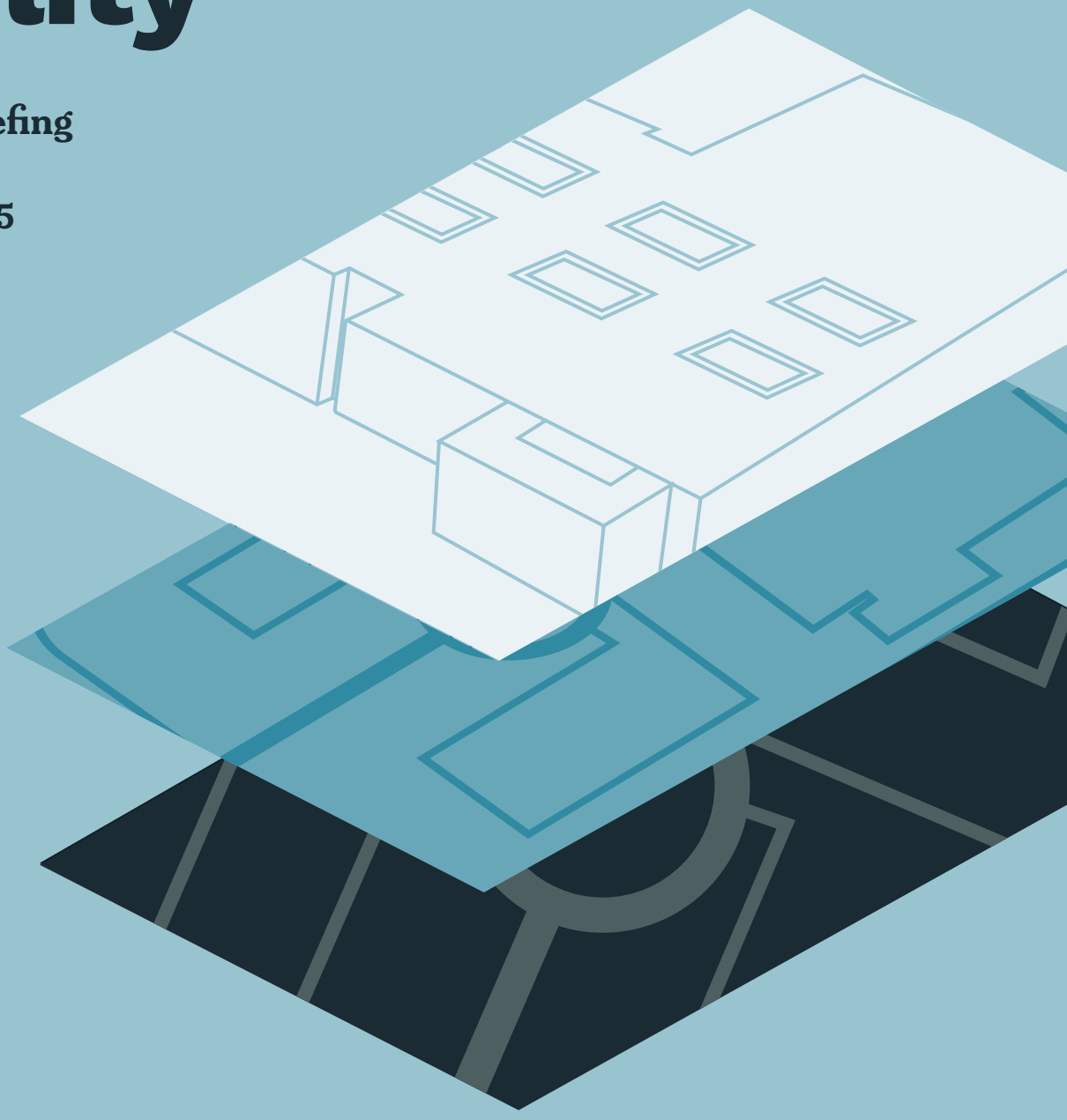
Monitoring Visit To

Shawangunk Correctional Facility

Post-Visit Briefing
May 2024
Issued June 2025



CANY
INDEPENDENT
PRISON OVERSIGHT
SINCE 1844

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Executive Summary

On May 21 and 22, 2024, the Correctional Association of New York (CANY) conducted a two-day monitoring visit to Shawangunk Correctional Facility, a maximum-security facility that houses incarcerated men 18 years and older. The visit was conducted as part of CANY's oversight mandate pursuant to Correctional Law §146(3).

Key Findings

Staff – Incarcerated Individual Interactions

1. **Relatively positive relations between incarcerated people and staff.** Incidents of abuse of incarcerated people at Shawangunk were reported at a rate 3% lower than the average (34%) of five recently visited maximum security facilities. CANY recorded positive impressions from incarcerated people regarding responsiveness and respect from staff.

2. **Concerns about privacy.** Some incarcerated people reported that female officers failed to announce themselves in the unit, in violation of Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) standards.

Medical and Dental Care

3. **Poor quality medical care.** Rates of satisfaction with medical care were 21% lower than three other recently visited maximum security facilities (48%) and significantly worse than any other facility in the sample. CANY documented concerns about the physician's lack of professionalism, poor communication of treatment plans, errors in administering medication and treatment, and lengthy delays in appointments for specialty care.

Programs and Recreation

4. **Good quality programs and high rates of enrollment.** The rate of respondents who reported access to the academic and vocational programs they needed was 83%. This is 17% higher than the average of five recently visited maximum security facilities (66%), and higher than any other prison in the sample. There was a high participation rate in college programs, and respondents reported good quality of the general library and law library services.

Facility Processes

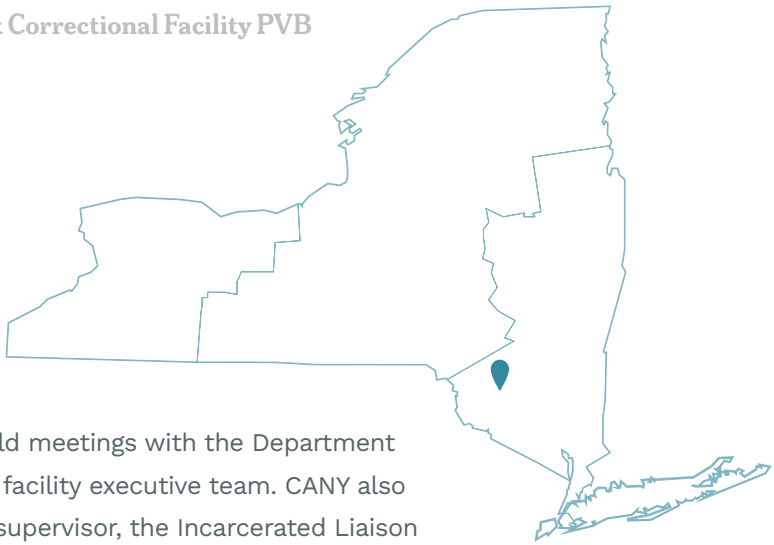
5. **Concerns about business office staffing and operations.** Incarcerated individuals and staff reported delays and problems with purchasing and disbursement, impacting all aspects of the facility life, including hazard and overtime pay for staff; commissary item orders; toiletries such as soap, toilet paper, and toothpaste for housing units; and inaccurate account balances for incarcerated organizations.

Basic Provision of Services

6. **Adequate food portions with some concerns about quality.** Interview data showed high rates of respondents perceiving adequate portions of food. However, some respondents raised complaints about the quality of food.

Grievances

7. **High rates of participation but low perceptions of fairness in the grievance program.** Interview data showed the highest proportion of respondents filing grievances at Shawangunk compared to other facilities and lower rates of trust in the grievance process.



Background

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 Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association (NYSCOPBA), the New York State Correctional Officers (Council 82), and the Civil Service Employee Association of New York (CSEA).[1] CANY also met with the Office of Mental Health (OMH) staff by telephone following the visit. CANY representatives conducted visual observations of housing units, mess halls,[2] the visiting room, the package room, the mail room, the chapel, the mosque, recreation yards, academic and vocational classrooms, the commissary, the law library, the general library, the print shop, and the Family Reunion Program (FRP). These meetings and observations allowed CANY to gain a better understanding of policies, procedures, and practices at Shawangunk Correctional Facility.

This report summarizes CANY's monitoring visit to Shawangunk 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. The report follows the structure detailed below:

- **Part I: Facility Overview with Executive Staff.** Combines information on the structure, operations, and key events as reported by the executive team and staff and a review of DOCCS administrative records for the facility for the time period of the visit.
- **Part II: Findings in Depth** presents an analysis of interview data in detail and compares responses collected at Shawangunk to those at other maximum-security prisons. This section also incorporates information collected from conversations with the executive team and other DOCCS staff.
- **Appendices A, B, C and D** explain CANY's methodology, depict demographic information about the population, and provide aggregated data from the interview protocol used by CANY representatives. A version of the initial impressions reported to the facility is also included in Appendix B.

1 On the day of CANY's visit there was no PEF representative available.

2 There is no central mess hall at Shawangunk; each housing unit has its own mess hall.

Part 1: Facility Overview with Executive Staff

Shawangunk Correctional Facility opened in 1985. According to DOCCS Directive 0082, Shawangunk is a maximum-security prison used for general confinement of males 18 years and older.[3] It is in the town of Shawangunk in Ulster County. On the first day of CANY's monitoring visit, 446 people were in custody at Shawangunk, which has a capacity of 524.

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

Physical Layout

Shawangunk has four housing blocks each containing two units of single cells, a small mess hall, a courtyard, and a recreation yard. The facility also has a housing unit for incarcerated individuals who use wheelchairs, with capacity for 16 people. Shawangunk also has a weight room that is specific for wheelchair users. The facility also operates a Special Housing Unit (SHU) and a General Population Restricted Unit (GPRU), both of which consist of single cells. The GPRU is located in the SHU building and houses individuals who are SHU-ineligible, such as people 55 and older and people with physical disabilities.

Capital Projects

The executive team answered questions about current and future capital projects. The facility was in the process of replacing a single generator with multiple generators. The executive team mentioned a future project to replace the windows in housing blocks, as the existing windows contained an insulating gas that impacts visibility. All housing units have stationary cameras, which amount to more than 1,000 cameras, all with audio recording capability. The facility was preparing to deploy body cameras; they were awaiting staff training and were planning to identify a select team of staff that would begin wearing them.

Programs

The executive team described the academic, vocational, industry, reentry, and peer-led programs available at the facility. A summary of the programs listed by the executive team and any additional discussion of a particular program can be found in the Programs section of this report.

Staffing

The executive team answered questions about their security, medical, mental health, program, and administrative staffing needs at the facility. According to the executive team, Shawangunk faced staffing challenges in security, medical, and administrative areas. Out of 260 correctional officer

3 NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision. (2021, September 24). Shawangunk Correctional Facility (DOCCS Directive 0082). https://doccs.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2024/11/0082.pdf

positions, 46 were vacant; the executive team reported challenges retaining security staff due in part to officers leaving DOCCS to work other jobs with the state police, courts, and county jails. The superintendent cited officers having to give up one regular day off per week to adequately staff the facility. They were anticipating the arrival of seven new correctional officers on June 10, 2024. Shawangunk had one captain, nine lieutenants, and 15 sergeants. There was a physician vacancy and a large number of nursing vacancies being covered by agency staff. There were four vacancies in the Business Office, and the facility reported difficulties recruiting new staff due to low salaries. The superintendent remarked that "[the biggest] challenge is staffing...the rest pales in comparison."

Population

Per the executive team, the facility's capacity is 524 incarcerated people. On the first day of the visit, May 21, 2024, the executive team reported there were 446 people in custody. The CANY visiting party carried out a total of 79 interviews with incarcerated individuals in general population units, representing approximately 18% of the population. At the time of CANY's visit, no one was housed in the SHU; however, there were three people in the GPRU.

Table 1. Breakdown of the Number of People Interviewed[4]

Housing	Interviews
General Population	76
General Population Restricted Unit (GPRU)	3
Total	**79**

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 Shawangunk population with that of the rest of the New York State prison population. Additional demographic data is available in Appendix C. "Incarcerated Individuals Under Custody" represents the individuals under the custody of DOCCS on a particular day. CANY reviewed the data file from May 1, 2024, the closest available file to the visit date. According to DOCCS Under custody data, on May 1, 2024, there were 444 people incarcerated at Shawangunk.

Unusual Incidents and Deaths

CANY reviewed administrative records on incidents, including deaths, between May 2023 and May 2024. These records include: (1) DOCCS' unusual incidents reports, (2) the State Commission of Correction's (SCOC) records of deaths in custody, which reflect a more complete account of deaths in DOCCS facilities, as some deaths in custody do not necessarily trigger an unusual incident report.[5] (3) The

4 CANY representatives did not conduct interviews in the SHU because there were no individuals housed in the SHU at the time of the visit.

5 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 records reflect 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.

Attorney General's Office of Special Investigation (AG OSI) records of deaths by suicide, and (4) the Office of Mental Health's (OMH) records of suicide attempts.

SCOC records show that two deaths occurred at Shawangunk between January and May 2024 and one death occurred the previous year, in September 2023. Neither OMH nor the Attorney General's records indicate suicides or attempts during the same period (see Table 3).

CANY's review of unusual incident reports reveals that the rates at Shawangunk for most of the selected incidents in the table below are lower or similar to that of the system. Rates of Assault on Incarcerated Individuals, Assaults on Staff, Weapons, Refused Instruction / Refused Strip Frisk, Cell Extraction, Other Disruptive Behavior, and Use of Chemical Irritants are lower at Shawangunk compared to systemwide. Rates of Use of Narcan and Contagious Disease are slightly higher at Shawangunk than systemwide.

Table 2. Monthly Average Incident Rate per 1,000 Incarcerated Individuals, May 2023 – May 2024[6]

Type	Incident	Shawangunk		Systemwide	
		Count	Avg. Monthly Rate 1k PPL. in Custody	Count	Avg. Monthly Rate 1k PPL. in Custody
Assaults	Assaults on Incarcerated Individual	7	1.3	1,699	4.3
	Assault on Staff	9	1.7	1,394	3.6
	Other Assaults	0	0.0	9	0.0
Contraband	Drugs/Alcohol	8	1.5	596	1.5
	Weapons	6	1.1	2,412	6.1
	Other	2	0.4	273	0.7
Disruptive Behavior	Refused Instruction/Refused Strip Frisk	7	1.3	1,210	3.1
	Cell Extraction	0	0.0	236	0.6
	Other	1	0.2	254	0.6
Facility Disruption	Accident	3	0.6	310	0.8
	Lost/Stolen Property	0	0.0	31	0.1
	Fire	1	0.2	35	0.1
Health-Related	Use of Narcan	9	1.7	554	1.4
	Use of AED	2	0.4	109	0.3
	Contagious Disease	2	0.4	86	0.2
Staff Use of Force	Use of Other Weapon	0	0.0	6	0.0
	Use of Baton	0	0.0	103	0.3
	Use of Chemical Irritant	6	1.1	1,879	4.8
Source: DOCCS Unusual Incident Reports, May 2023 - May 2024					

6 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.

Table 3. Rate of Suicide Attempts and Deaths by Suicide per 1,000 Incarcerated Individuals, May 2023 – May 2024[7]

Incident	Shawangunk		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	51	1.6
Deaths by Suicide **Excludes non-fatal suicide attempts**	0	0.0	17	0.5

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

Part II: Findings in Depth

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.

To gauge whether the responses at Shawangunk mirror those at other maximum-security prisons, CANY compared close-ended responses collected on this visit to those collected between October 2022 and January 2024, including Elmira, Coxsackie, Eastern, and Wende.

Commissary

A lower-than-average percentage of the incarcerated population at Shawangunk reported that the commissary was adequately stocked compared to other facilities in the sample.

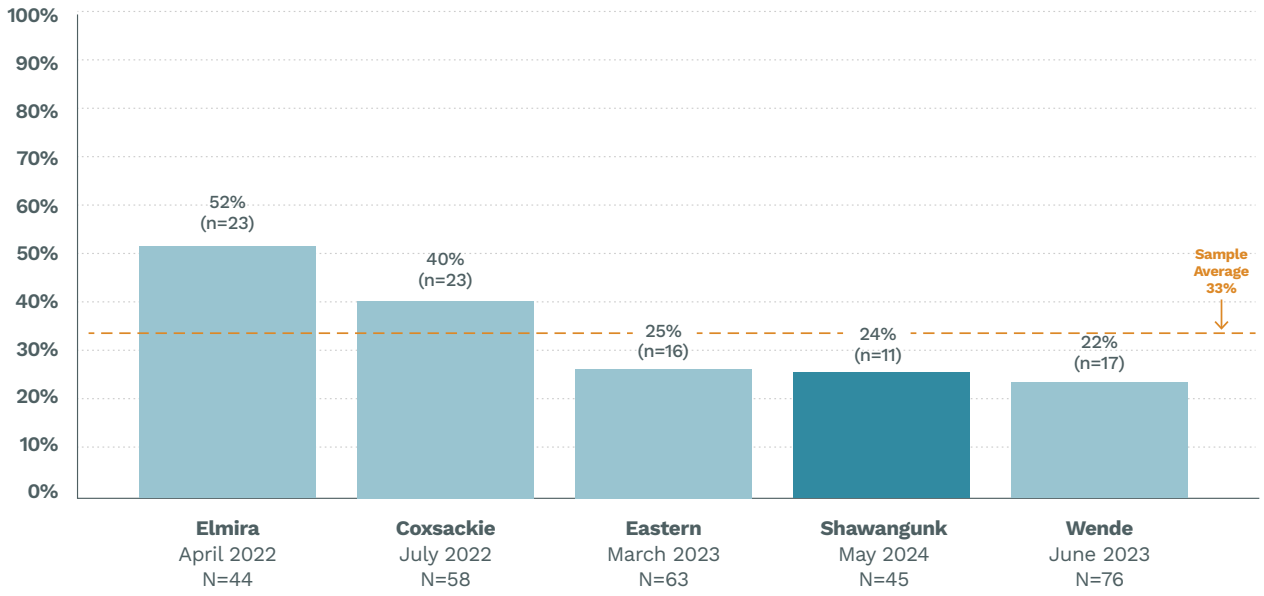
While CANY consistently finds that out-of-stock commissary items are an issue across DOCCS facilities, this concern was found to be worse than average at Shawangunk. Twenty-four percent (24%, 11/45) of respondents in general population units at Shawangunk reported that the commissary is adequately stocked. When asked to elaborate on their experiences with the commissary, 92% (44/48) of respondents expressed negative experiences. CANY representatives were informed that Shawangunk also fills commissary orders for incarcerated

7 Reported suicides are based on CANY analysis of the AG OSI's annual reporting. New York State Attorney General Office of Special Investigation. October 2, 2024. Data-tables-31-aug-2024. New York State Attorney General. https://ag.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2024-10/data-tables-31-aug-2024.xlsx

people at the neighboring facility, Wallkill Correctional Facility. Many incarcerated people believed this arrangement impacted the availability of stock at Shawangunk.

Figure 1. Reports of Access to Commissary

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



Availability of commissary items

Twenty-five respondents reported issues related to items being frequently out of stock. One person said that "orders are filled partially," and another said that there is a "long list of out-of-stock items."

Members of the ILC cited problems in the business office, which they said had begun during the COVID-19 pandemic and persisted since. They said that staff submit purchase orders for commissary items, but that those orders are not processed, which impacts commissary stock. They also said that individuals were not able to access accounts on tablets due to failures to maintain records properly. One ILC member stated that problems with the business office heavily impacted the facility. "The business office is the heart – if the heart is not pumping, the body dies."[8] In the debrief meeting at the conclusion of the visit, the superintendent stated that they were seeking an additional employee to work at the business office to address these concerns.

The commissary at Shawangunk also serves Wallkill, which some people cited as a reason for problems with orders and out-of-stock items. "They're always out of stock...service two jails... it's like first come first serve."

8 The commissary was one of a number of issues reportedly affected by problems at the business office. According to ILC members, staff overtime pay and accounts held by incarcerated organizations were also affected by issues at the business office.

One respondent believed that there was a lack of communication between the commissary officer and the head steward, who is responsible for ordering items, about which items were frequently out of stock and needed replenishing.

Commissary prices

Respondents also identified high and increasing prices with low wages and limited buy limits as a main concern. Of the 17 respondents who commented on prices at the commissary, 14 complained about the cost.

- "Price gouging every two weeks."
- "Overpriced."
- "Everything goes up except for pay."

One problem cited by respondents at Shawangunk, which CANY has documented elsewhere, is the limitation placed by Central Office on each commissary "buy."[9] Within the $90 limit for each buy, an individual must purchase both food and hygiene items for a two-week period. One respondent complained that because personal hygiene products like toilet paper and toothpaste are included in the $90 buy limit, he did not have enough money left to buy all the food items he wanted.

Availability of healthy items

Additionally, respondents identified a shortage of healthy items available for purchase from the commissary.[10] Thirty-three percent (33%, 12/36) of respondents expressed concerns about the lack of healthy options. One said that the food is not nutritious. Another person said that there are no fruits or vegetables.

- "They feed us food that little kids go to [the] candy store for after school or lunchtime."
- "There are no fruits and veggies and too much junk food on [the] commissary."
- "Nothing healthy here to eat."
- "It's mostly snacks.....would like to see way more healthy options."

Linking the issue to the out-of-stock problem above, two people said that there was a higher rate of out-of-stock for healthier items.

- "All the things that are great for you always seem to be missing."
- "Never out of the bad stuff, the shit that [will] kill you they got."
- "No produce."

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

10 The need for greater availability of healthy food items across DOCCS facility is addressed in detail in CANY's November 2024, *Food and Nutrition in New York State Correctional Facilities*. https://correctionalassociation.org/s/CANY_Food+and+Nutrition+in+NY_Nov2024.pdf

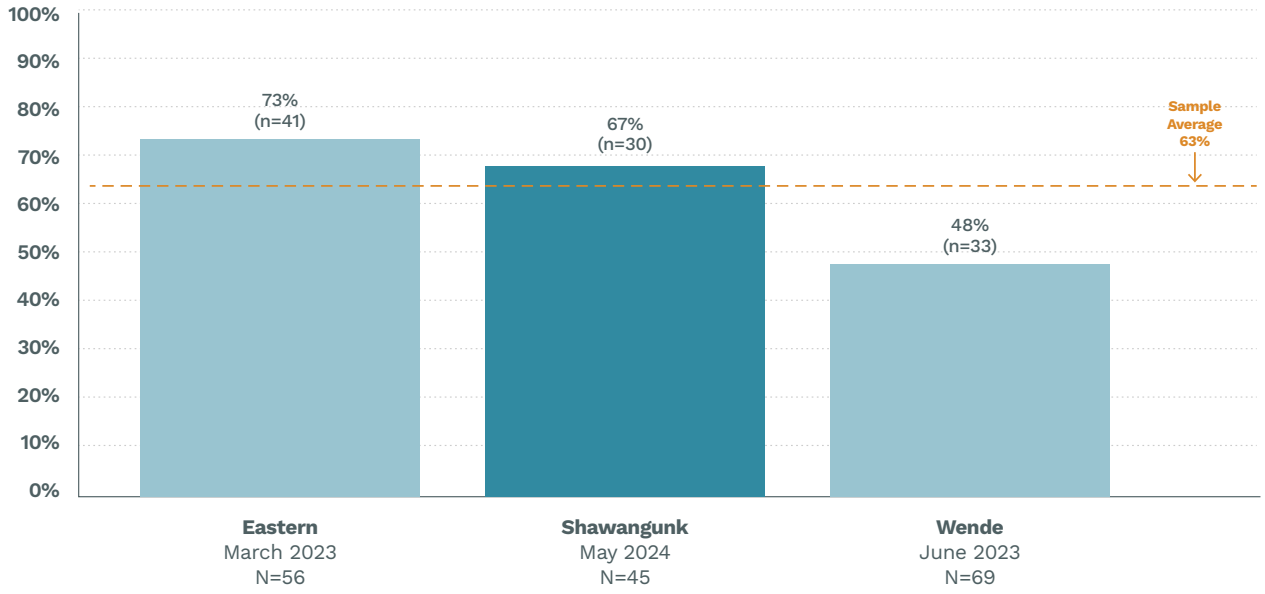
When CANY representatives raised these concerns, the superintendent stated that stock issues are caused by a lack of storage space in the facility and that staff are working to remove items that don't sell well to make enough space for the most popular items.

Packages

The proportion of respondents at Shawangunk who reported receiving package items in a timely manner falls at the median point of the sample.

Figure 2. Reports of Access to Packages

▶ % 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 Elmira or Coxsackie.

Timeliness of package delivery

Respondents cited some problems with untimely package delivery (17 individuals). Others gave an estimated typical time for receipt of packages. "If I put an order in on Friday, it arrives on Sunday." Another said, "Food arrives on a Thursday, and we don't receive it until Monday." One individual stated that meat goes bad before packages are delivered, even if they have been cleared for distribution.

Five individuals indicated that the issues were related to staffing. One said that timely access depends on who is staffing the room, and that staff had said that delays were due to being shorthanded. "They say, 'We don't have the manpower to manage packages.'"

Explanations for package denial

There were mixed responses regarding the quality of communication over items permitted in packages. One person said, “They give you a list of what you can't and can have,” which made it easier to avoid items being refused. One individual said, “No issue with packages. I have never had nothing rejected.”

In contrast, others stated there was some confusion over permitted items. Four of the 17 individuals who elaborated on their experiences with packages identified inconsistent application of rules. One person said that the rules are “sometimes inconsistent.” Another said that “every officer has a different interpretation of the directive.”

The IGRC supervisor said that most grievances related to packages could be resolved informally and that packages were not a major issue at Shawangunk.

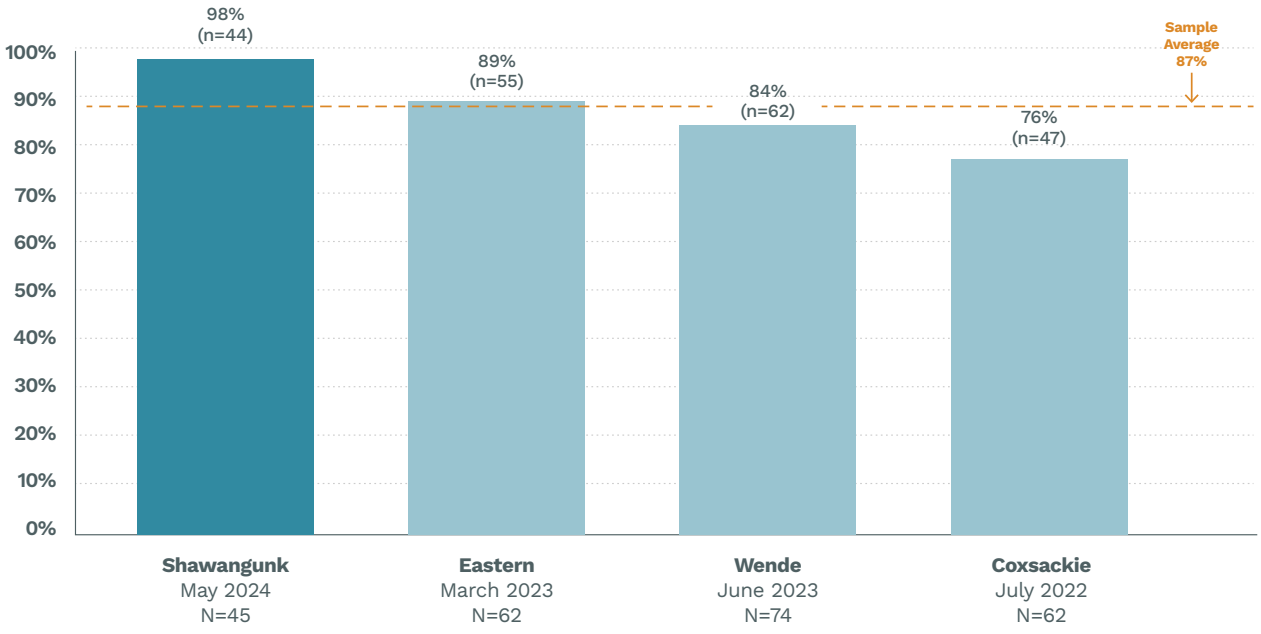
Food

A higher proportion than average reported receiving adequate portions of food than at other recently monitored facilities. However, concerns about the quality of the food and hygiene were expressed.

Unlike other facilities, Shawangunk does not have a central mess hall; each housing unit has its own. Housing units at Shawangunk have a capacity of 64 people. CANY representatives observed the mess halls in the housing units, which are located on the third level of the unit. Officers allow approximately 16-22 people in the mess hall at one time. Incarcerated people have 20 minutes to eat and are allowed to bring four slices of bread and fresh fruit back to their cells.

Figure 3. Reports of Access to Meals

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



Food quality

There were five respondents speaking positively about the quantity of food. Backing up the closed-ended data, one respondent said, "You eat real good here. Staff does not shortchange people on food."

However, while responses were more positive at Shawangunk than other facilities regarding portion size, concerns surfaced about the quality of the food served in the mess hall: Some pointed to an unsatisfactory experience with food (22 instances). One respondent noted that the portions were adequate, but the quality was poor.

- "Adequate portions of trash... borderline cat food/dog food."
- "They always mix the rice with the garbage."
- "The food here sucks. They give us this food in a bag [referring to the cook-chill method used by DOCCS] and they expect us to eat it for years."

Food hygiene

In addition to the concerns raised over food quality, six respondents identified health risks from food. One said, "The kitchen is beyond filthy, with bacteria stuck to the trays." Another said, "The food is deadly." One individual recounted that when he had worked in the mess hall, he found a glove in one of the bags.

In the meeting with the ILC, members expressed concerns that food sent in bags from the Food Production Center as part of the cook-chill system resulted in chemicals entering the food.[11] They said that, as an example, in A2 block, 14-22 people eat in the mess hall on a good day (out of 64 people in total). Thirteen respondents said that they do not eat in the mess hall at all.

Nutritional value of food

Eight people expressed more general concerns about the nutritional value of the food served:

- "An alternate diet is what I need. I'm 50lbs more than when I first came here."
- "I should eat fish, fruit, and vegetables every day, according to the doctor. I need a special diet."
- "There are no fresh vegetables, just quick [sic] chill."
- "I try not to eat State food. Why not get a healthier menu?"

Two respondents expressed concern about excessive soy. One said, "I'm a vegetarian, so it's rough...[I] go to commissary to supplement my diet. There's a lot of soy and processed food."

11 In November 2024, CANY published a report titled "Food and Nutrition in New York State Correctional Facilities," which addressed concerns about plastic. DOCCS advised that they were produced by Plascon. The Plascon website provides a "Certificate of Conformity with Global Standards for Packaging Materials." See page 20. https://www.correctionalassociation.org/other-reports/food-and-nutrition-in-new-york-state-correctional-facilities

Another said, “There is terrible food. I don't eat there. All they serve is soy products.”

One person on a special diet expressed concerns about whether it was being adequately followed. Finally, one person said, “With the special diet, we're lucky if we get chicken every two weeks, same with tuna...I know they are not following that menu up there.”

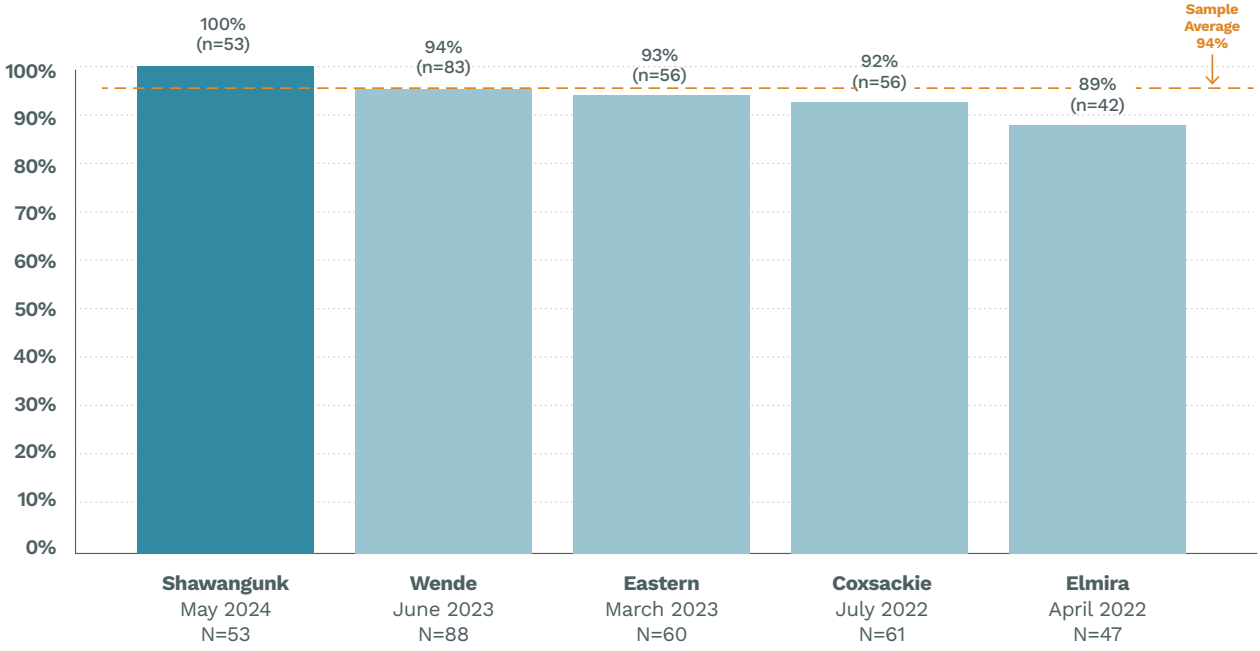
Phones & Tablets

All respondents at Shawangunk reported being able to make phone calls.

All respondents reported being able to make phone calls. This is the highest in comparable facilities that have recently been visited. CANY representatives observed five phones in each housing unit, two in the courtyard and three in the dayroom in the housing unit. At the time of CANY’s visit, Shawangunk did not have the ability to make phone calls via the tablet.

Figure 4. Reports of Access to Phone Calls

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



- Note: CANY asked "Do you have access to phone calls, either by using the phones or through a tablet?" at Elmira and Coxsackie and "Are you able to make phone calls, using the phones through a tablet?" at all other prisons in the sample.

Two individuals elaborated on their experiences. One of them identified that there was an inadequate number of phones. A second respondent said that gangs controlled the phones. One other person said that "something happened, and they cut phone times for everyone to 15 minutes a day. If you get phones on the tablet, it'll stop a lot of violence."[12]

Visits

All respondents had access to in-person visits. However, a few individuals raised concerns about policies perceived to infringe on the religious rights of their visitors.

All respondents in general population units reported that they had access to in-person visits. In addition to the regular visiting room, Shawangunk also has an "enhanced visiting area," a separate room where incarcerated people without disciplinary tickets can sit at tables with their families. Incarcerated individuals must get approval from the superintendent to use this space. The superintendent said that staffing this room requires some overtime on the weekends. Additionally, there is a visitor hospitality center at Shawangunk, which is open on weekends and operated by the Osborne Association. Osborne staff in the hospitality center greet visitors and provide information about the visiting process and other resources.[13]

Respect for visitors' religious rights.

While CANY did not ask incarcerated people to elaborate on their experiences with visits, two respondents reported incidents impacting visitors. Both incidents were about their relatives' religious rights not being respected.

One person said that when processing visitors, officers have required them to take wigs and religious beads off and informed them that this was a new policy. The respondent said that the staff had not produced evidence of this policy.

Family Reunion Program

The Family Reunion Program takes place in four trailer units at Shawangunk, which are also used by incarcerated individuals housed at neighboring facilities, Wallkill and Otisville.[14] CANY representatives visited the FRP area and observed the various amenities available for use, which included a basketball hoop, a playground, picnic tables, and a BBQ grill for families to use during the visits. The unit contains an air fryer, microwave, A/C unit, TV, refrigerator, stove, Nintendo system, utensils, plates, pots, and radio. There were two bedrooms, one bathroom, and a highchair.

12 DOCCS has stated that tablets will be available to make phone calls at all facilities by February 2025.

13 Osborne runs Visitor Hospitality Centers at 16 prisons across the state. https://www.osborneny.org/our-services/visiting-support-in-prisons

14 For more information about the Family Reunion Program, see https://doccs.ny.gov/family-reunion-program.

The ILC highlighted concerns about access to the FRP program, which is only possible for those who have completed mandatory programs in aggression replacement therapy and alcohol and substance abuse treatment. As these programs are frequently scheduled close to release dates, and because many individuals housed at Shawangunk are serving long sentences, the ILC said that many people are not eligible.

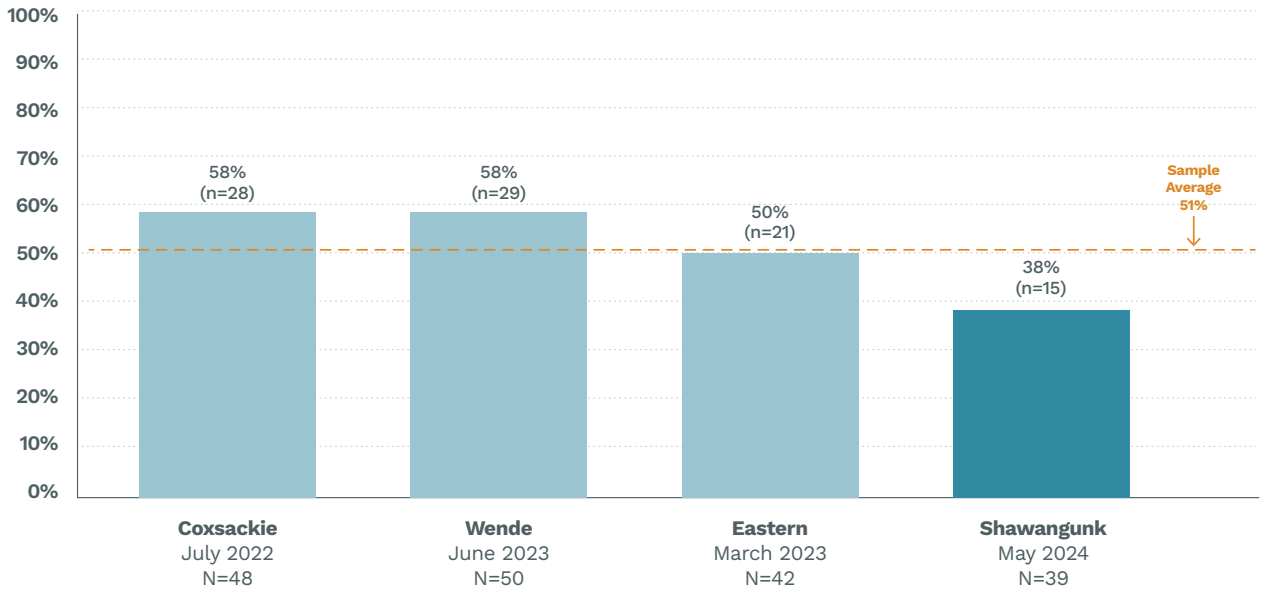
Healthcare

The proportion of respondents at Shawangunk who reported receiving adequate medical care is the lowest among the prisons in the sample. Many incarcerated people reported concerns about the physician.

Only 38% (15/39) of respondents at Shawangunk reported receiving adequate medical care. Concerns were expressed about the provider's lack of professionalism (35 instances), poor communication of treatment plans, errors in administering medication (3 instances) and treatment, and lengthy delays in appointments for specialty care (14 instances).

Figure 5. Reports of Satisfaction of Health Care

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



▶ Note: Excludes "N/A" responses. CANY did not ask this question at Elmira

Quality of care

At the beginning of the monitoring visit, the executive team stated that their budgeted fill level provided for two full-time physicians. However, they had one full-time physician who received support from the doctor at Wallkill. Seven nurses covered sick call, the infirmary, infectious diseases, discharge, and elderly care; 2.5 vacancies were filled by contracted nurses. The executive team expressed concern about fatigue and reported that providers were working overtime.

The consequences of an overstretched medical team were reflected in incarcerated people's perceptions of a lack of follow-up and communication. The ILC reported that some people had waited four months to get results from tests and that one person died from cancer because he had waited for 10 months to get treatment. One respondent said that when he developed a lump in his chest, he "went down to the doctor worried and then waited five to six months for results." The facility's medical staff did not provide the results to him until his family called to inquire.

Another said that two weeks prior, he had an X-ray and had received no response. He reported that his knee was hurting, and he hadn't seen a doctor. Another said that he had an injured ankle. He had an X-ray over 90 days earlier, and he said nothing else had been done to refer him or communicate the next steps. "There is zero communication," he said.

Many incarcerated people reported concerns about the facility doctor (32 individuals). There were multiple issues related to unprofessional behavior from staff, specifically about the doctor. One said that communication with the doctor was difficult due to a language barrier. Another said that the doctor had an "attitude problem." The ILC reported that the doctor tells people what their issues are and doesn't take into consideration what or how people are feeling. They pointed to a pending lawsuit regarding medical care at Shawangunk related to events in 2021, and that no improvements had been observed since it was filed.[15] One incarcerated individual described it as "a culture of neglect", stating that even when they were fully staffed, medical care was negligent.

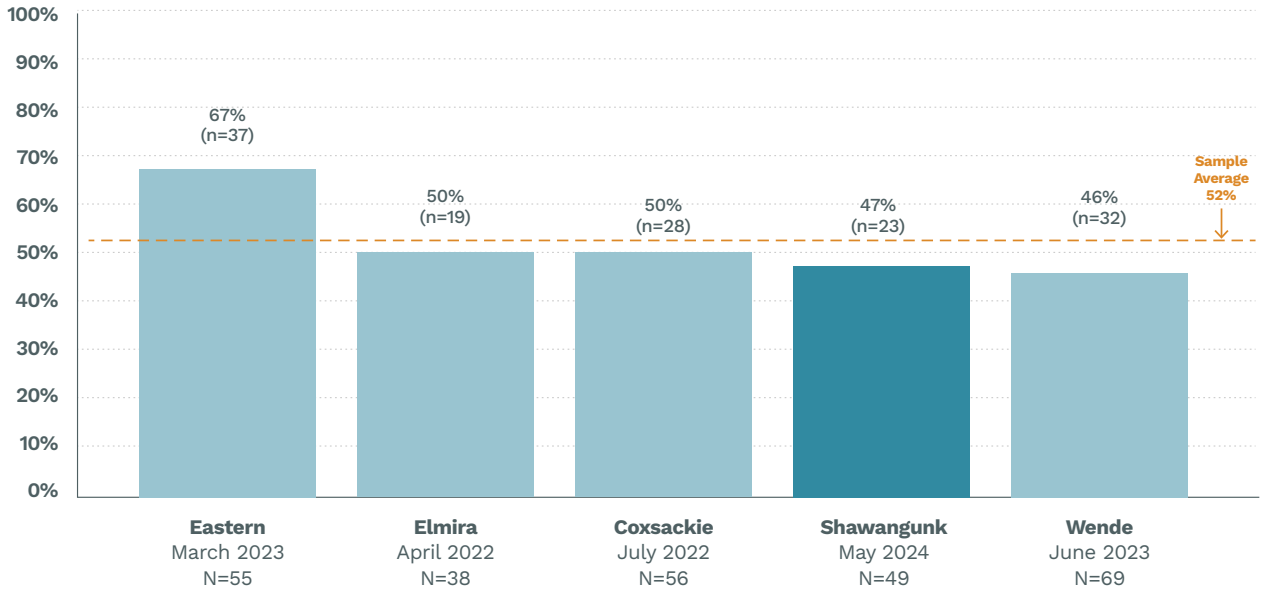
Access to healthcare

Despite the challenges identified above, the proportion of respondents who reported having unaddressed health needs at Shawangunk is lower than in most other prisons in a recent comparable sample.

15 United States District Court, Northern District of New York. Verdi vs Farah et al. September 2022 https://cases.justia.com/federal/district-courts/new-york/nyndce/9:2022cv00825/134007/6/0.pdf?ts=1663246926

Figure 6. Reports of Unaddressed Medical or Dental Needs

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



Respondents commented on difficulties accessing care within the facility. One said that his leg had been broken in three places, and he was left in his cell for multiple days before receiving treatment. Another said that even after seeing the doctor, it was difficult to receive dedicated attention. “You wait four to five months to see him and when you do it's like he has some sort of clock running.”

One respondent said that Shawangunk is a “wheelchair facility,” but very little support is provided to wheelchair users. He said he was denied accommodation, including a grabber to reach the property in his locker or under his bed and additional access to the laundry area. Other individuals noted that the distance between the wheelchair unit and the location of classrooms is prohibitive for people using wheelchairs.

Access to specialty care

At Shawangunk, some specialty care services are provided onsite, like audiology, radiology, physical therapy, optometry (one time a month), phlebotomy (two times a month), and podiatry (one time a month). The ILC and other respondents cited long waits for specialty care. The ILC stated that, “The doctor here doesn’t want to make any referrals.”

Thirteen respondents reported long wait times to see a specialist or to get follow-up care. One respondent said that he has back problems and sciatic nerve issues. He was told nothing could be done and had not been seen by medical staff since then. He was told by medical staff six months prior that he needed to see a specialist but had not been referred to one

since then. Similarly, another respondent said that a cardiologist recommended specialist treatment five months prior, but he had heard nothing since then. One person was told that he was too young for a colonoscopy despite being middle-aged.

Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)

Of the 25 people enrolled, four are on methadone, 13 are on Suboxone (administered daily), and eight are on Sublocade (administered monthly). There was no waiting list at the time of the visit, and staff said that it is not difficult to manage due to a small caseload. MAT medication is administered at 12:15pm, which is a different time than regular medication to avoid diversion.

Staff stated that diversion (not taking the prescribed medication) was a serious problem. Patients who were caught diverting were counseled, and if they diverted three times, they were tapered off the program gradually (by 2mg a week).

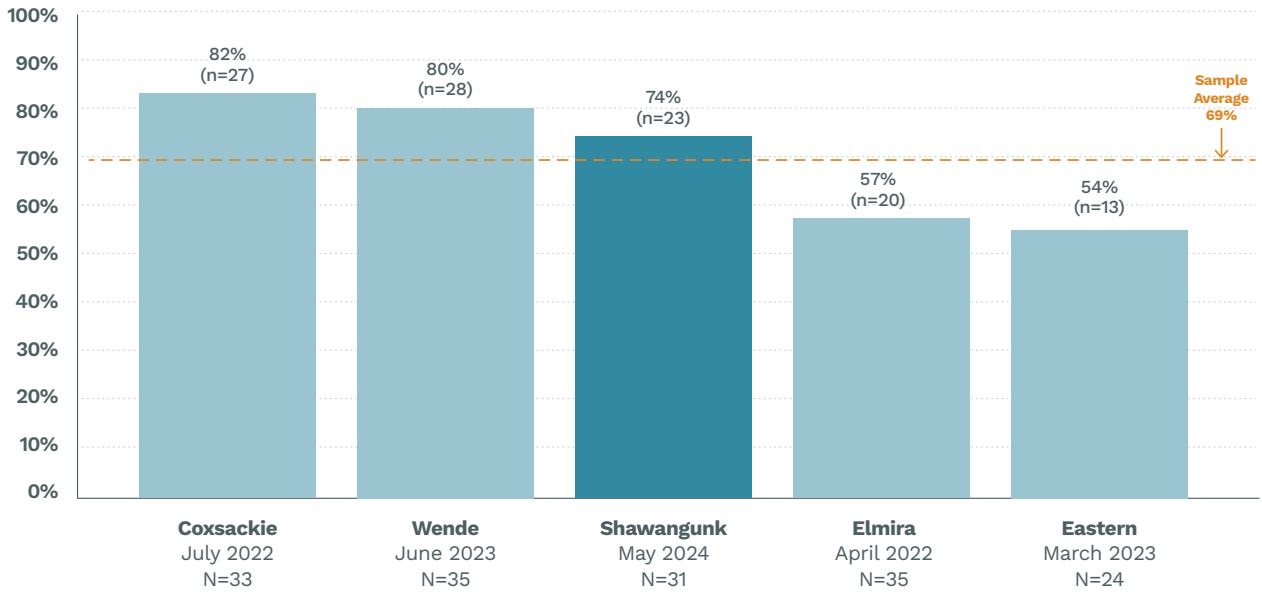
The doctor at Shawangunk conducts screenings for the MAT program once a month. If people on the MAT program want to see a doctor or nurse outside of that time, they must submit a sick call request.

Dental care

Seventy-four percent (74%, 23/31) of respondents said that the dental care they received was adequate. The proportion of respondents at Shawangunk who reported receiving adequate dental care is at the median of the sample. However, of the people who elaborated on their experience, four expressed dissatisfaction with the dental care they received.

Figure 8. Reports of Access to Dental Care

▶ % of respondents in GP units who reported receiving an adequate level of dental care



▶ Excludes "N/A" responses.

In comments expressing dissatisfaction with dental care, one person cited the poor state of the equipment: "I went in 2021 and there was dust on all the equipment, so I walked out. I don't bother anymore with dental."

Another said, "The dentist sends folks out for dental work because there are four chairs in the dental office, and only one [chair] works."

Mental Health Care

A significant number of respondents at Shawangunk expressed concerns about difficulties in accessing mental health care and the quality of care provided.

Shawangunk is a level 2 mental health facility, which means that staff are assigned on a full-time basis. There were 39 people on the OMH caseload at the time of the visit.[16] OMH staff stated that there was one full-time social worker and one part-time social worker. The head of the forensic unit is shared among three other facilities. Of the 33 respondents who commented on mental health care, 25 expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of care provided. Seventy-one percent (71%, 24/34) of respondents reported that access to mental healthcare was difficult.

Accessing mental health services

Only 15% of respondents (5/34) stated that they could access the needed mental health programs. One person said that he was struggling with being incarcerated but was finding it difficult to access mental health services without accepting medication. He was not on the OMH caseload. He said that as there is no violence at Shawangunk, the administration should have the bandwidth to focus on mental health.

Another said, "I am trying to get therapy, but they don't want to give it to me." Another respondent who had no mental health diagnosis said that there was "No support for mental health needs." Another said, "We need more mental health programs."

Another person who was not on the OMH caseload said, "Recently, we had a couple of deaths here. You would think they'd send a provider to check the temperature of [the] facility...don't get a chance to properly grieve. When an officer dies, they shut down the whole jail so they can grieve." In a meeting with the executive team, the superintendent expressed his belief that providing support following a death in the facility, such as access to the chaplain, was very important. A memorial was held in the facility for the two deaths that occurred in 2024.

16 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', doccs-att6.pdf.

Quality of mental health services

Some concerns were raised about the nature of mental health care offered and the quality of staff. One respondent asserted the belief that mental health care is provided in the form of medication rather than therapy and that this is part of an approach that was intended to make the population submissive. Another said, “They have only one rep and I do not want to deal with her.” Another said, “Some are professionals and some are not.” Another expressed a lack of trust and said that “you can't talk freely with mental health providers. You don't know what's going to happen with the information.”

In contrast, one person singled out an OMH clinician for being excellent. OMH staff indicated that they had a good working relationship with the DOCCS executive team and that the size of the caseload allowed them to manage patients’ needs well.

Other services and environmental factors

Some incarcerated people discussed the impact of the institutional culture at Shawangunk on mental health. One person described Shawangunk as a positive environment. “To be honest, it has been the best place. There are lots of programs offered here. I can focus more on myself. The environment here allows people to be at peace. We are incarcerated but participate in self-help,” he said. Another cited how people support each other, “If we see a guy in distress, we come around [to support each other].” The superintendent mentioned that Shawangunk was sometimes referred to, only somewhat ironically, as Shangri-La.

Another person explained that he was part of Project Build, a volunteer-led program that had just introduced a segment to deal with trauma. “It is life-changing. We have had tough conversations that are hard to have about past traumas and triggers. It helps us keep the right mindset.”

Another person suggested that the overall environment concerning mental health would be improved if there were better training for all staff. “Officers need training for dealing with people with mental health [problems].”

Programming and Recreation

Respondents at Shawangunk reported the most access to academic and vocational programs in the sample and provided positive reviews of the college program. Despite this, respondents cited an overall lack of programs and rehabilitation opportunities and barriers to accessing the Family Reunion Program (FRP).

Shawangunk offers a range of academic, vocational, industry, and other programs. The following information was compiled from CANY representative notes from the initial meeting with the executive team and program area walkthroughs on May 21-22, 2024.

Therapeutic. The facility offers mandated therapeutic programs, including regular and moderate Aggression Replacement Training (ART) curricula, Alcohol and Substance Abuse Training (ASAT), and Sex Offender Counseling and Treatment Program (SOCTP), taking place in a 64-bed housing unit. SOCTP consists of individual and group counseling, individualized treatment planning, and psycho-educational groups throughout six to 18 months, depending on individual needs and progress in the program.[17] At the time of CANY's visit, the DOCCS psychologist and social worker positions assigned to SOCTP were vacant. Shawangunk also offers Trauma, Addiction, Mental Health, and Recovery (TAMAR), a trauma-informed group curriculum designed to identify and practice self-regulation strategies.[18] At the time of CANY's visit, there were 12 people enrolled in ASAT and 37 enrolled in ART (23 in regular ART which is taught by incarcerated peers, and 14 in moderate ART which is taught by staff). Program staff explained that the moderate aggression version of ART is designed for individuals with higher risk scores and includes components of the cognitive behavioral program Thinking for a Change; the program also addresses trauma.

Academic. Individuals at Shawangunk may participate in pre-High School Equivalency (HSE) and HSE classes and two college programs. At the time of CANY's visit, pre-HSE and HSE classes were being taught by the same instructor as the HSE instructor position was vacant; the administration had identified an instructor candidate and were waiting for approval from Central Office. There were 11 students enrolled in each class. Higher education non-profit Hudson Link offers a two-year degree program through SUNY Ulster and a four-year degree program through Mount Saint Mary College. Shawangunk had an especially high enrollment of 124 students in all college and pre-college higher education programs. Hudson Link operates a study hall and computer lab with 20 workstations.

Vocational and industry. Shawangunk offers four vocational programs: Carpentry, Computer Operator, General Business, and Print Shop. The carpentry instructor position was vacant, and the administration reported they had identified an instructor candidate and were waiting for approval from Central Office. The administration was also awaiting approval from Central Office for a request they had submitted to bring a barbering program to the facility. CANY representatives visited the Print Shop, which had a variety of equipment, including four lithograph machines and five desktop publishing computer stations. In addition to vocational programs, Shawangunk also operates Corcraft industry programs in which participants manufacture furniture and clothing.

17 The curriculum covers the following major subject areas: "cognitive distortions, core values and beliefs, sexual abuse, the cycle of sexual offending behavior, relapse prevention skills, relationships, and discharge planning" (NY Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, 2018, p.9). NY Department of Corrections and Community Supervision. (2018). *Sex Offender Counseling and Treatment Program (SOCTP) Guidelines*.

18 NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision. *Trauma, Addiction, Mental Health, and Recovery*. NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision. Retrieved December 23, 2024, from https://doccs.ny.gov/trauma-addiction-mental-health-and-recovery-tamar

Family Reunion Program. Shawangunk hosts a Family Reunion Program (FRP) where individuals can spend extended time with family members in trailers containing a small living room, kitchenette, two bedrooms, and bathroom complemented by a picnic table, charcoal grill, a basketball court, and a playground outside. The kitchens were equipped with stoves, microwaves, and air fryers at the request of participants. The program also serves nearby facilities Otisville and Wallkill. A member of the executive team described the approval process for FRP as "arduous" and noted that an applicant's crime of conviction could factor into determining eligibility. Respondents also noted their experiences having to first take mandated programs, such as ASAT and/or ART, as a pre-requisite to becoming eligible for FRP. The executive team described a trend of participants dropping out of ASAT during orientation as a reason for low ASAT enrollment numbers, as described in further detail under mandated program enrollment. These strict requirements likely contribute to limited enrollment in FRP. The executive team reported that participation numbers are such that individuals can use the facilities approximately once every six weeks.

Reentry. Shawangunk offers all three phases of Transitional Services, though the executive team reported that a low number of people are released from Shawangunk. These programs are complemented by a parole board preparation workshop facilitated by Exodus Transitional Community.

General library. CANY representatives observed a large general library (with capacity for 43 people) with a wide selection of books including college textbooks. Individuals can find books by browsing a digital database and the librarian runs a book club for interested participants. Graduates of the facility's college program tutor students who are learning to read in the Literacy Center. The executive team reported that the librarian tries to increase access to books across the facility by delivering books to people housed in the SHU and infirmary and has established a book cart in one of the facility hallways. The librarian also organizes a SUNY speaker series program.

Law Library. CANY representatives observed several people working independently in the law library. A sign at the door indicated that the law library is available Monday to Friday from 8:00 am to 11:20 am and 12:45 pm to 3:35 pm. The law library weekend hours are in the evenings from 6:00 pm to 8:45 pm. Clerks have access to research computers featuring Westlaw and LexisNexis and word processing computers. Clerks reported that several of the word processors had been broken for multiple years. The clerks recommended that Shawangunk install Microsoft Word, which they have in the Hudson Link computer lab, as it would be superior to the older word processing software currently available in the law library. There were eight computers and two typewriters available for incarcerated people's use. At the time of CANY's visit all computers were being used.

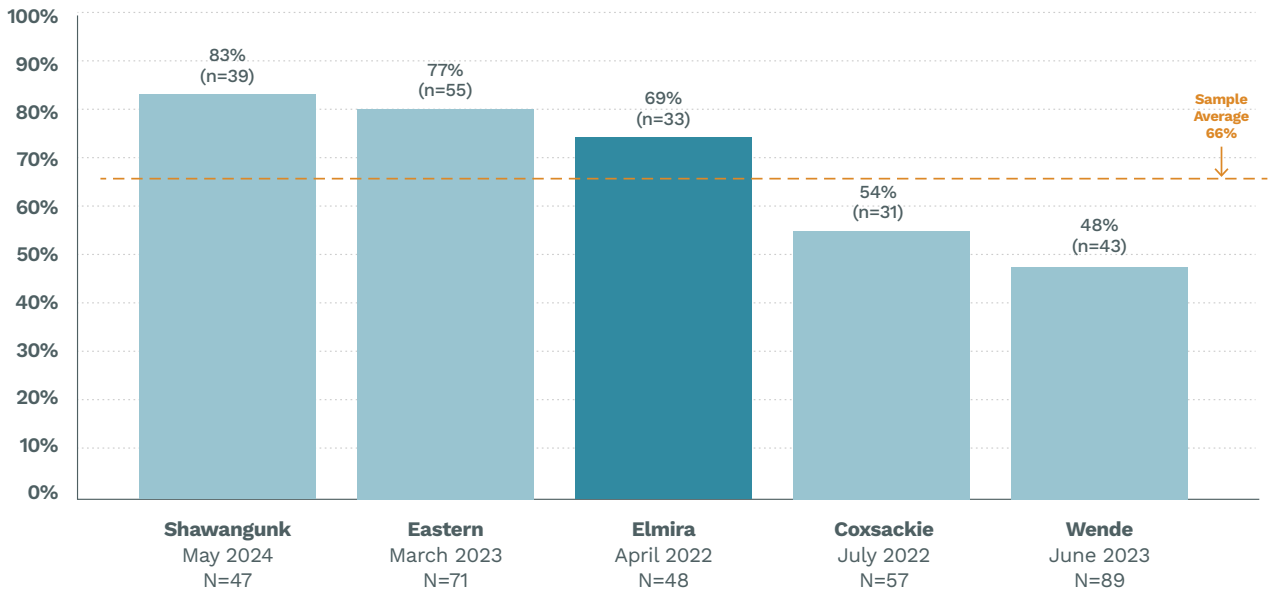
Recreation. Each general population housing block has a large yard that includes a weights area and basketball nets. Individuals can choose to participate in recreation for either two or

four hours per day. Each housing unit also has a small courtyard with two phones available. The E-block yard is especially large and could accommodate everyone from all blocks at one time. The Superintendent mentioned a proposal to turn a portion of E-block yard into a vegetable garden in partnership with Cornell Cooperative in which incarcerated individuals would tend to the garden; they would keep 75% of the food while the remaining 25% would be donated to the community. This proposal was voted down by the ILC because it would reduce recreation space. The superintendent said he planned to revisit the proposal with the ILC.

Peer-led organizations. Shawangunk features ten organizations led by incarcerated people. ILC and IGRC representatives conveyed their disapproval of the Business Office's stewardship of organizational accounts and funds, citing delays and inaccuracies in financial statements. Each organization has its own account and organization leaders used to receive monthly financial statements until about two years ago. Recently, a respondent cited requesting a statement and waiting six months to receive it. The executive team was aware of the issue and explained that they were in the process of hiring a new, more experienced person for the accounting role.

Figure 9. Reports of Access to Academic and Vocational Programs

▶ % 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 yous need? at Shawangunk and "Do you have access to the academic and vocational programs you need? at all other prisons in the sample.

Of the 34 respondents who elaborated on their experiences with programs, perspectives were mixed; some respondents cited satisfactory experiences with programs (12 instances) and more respondents cited unsatisfactory experiences with programs (30 instances). Some respondents describing unsatisfactory experiences reported wanting more programs and a lack of rehabilitation opportunities. Respondents also reported having to wait to enroll in mandated programs, barriers to accessing the Family Reunion Program (FRP), issues physically accessing programs and recreation for people with limited mobility and receiving low wages.

Satisfactory experience with programs

In 12 instances, respondents at Shawangunk cited satisfactory experience with programs. One individual described the facility's approach to program enrollment, stating, "they are pretty good with that...get you taken care of." Respondents provided several positive reports about the college program (7 instances), describing college as the best program at the facility, calling it "amazing," and praising individual courses such as public speaking, psychology, and sociology.

Desire for more programs

Several respondents expressed wanting more programs at Shawangunk (18 instances), including a few who cited a lack of opportunities for rehabilitation. One respondent described a need for more programming to develop oneself. One individual who reported a lack of programs cited parole board implications, explaining that parole commissioners were penalizing parole applicants for not being active in programs. A couple of respondents reported needing programming for "long-termers" (people serving long sentences) and older adults, citing a desire to be around older adult peers. Two individuals reported a need for additional vocational program opportunities that could help with job searching in the community, including training to receive a Commercial Driving License (CDL) and computer repair. Two respondents reported that their limited physical mobility prevented them from accessing programs and recreation, of particular concern considering that Shawangunk houses an older population than most facilities in the state.[19] Despite Shawangunk being designated a wheelchair facility, they reported problems with accessibility, including one individual who had to stop working in the law library due to hip pain and not being able to walk the stairs to the library. The following statements further illustrate reasons for respondents' desire for more programs.

- "Self-help programs should be eligible for people that need it."
- "There are not enough programs, 75% of them are porters."
- "They have programs that are good for parole, but...they need programming for 'long-termers.'"
- "We need more programs for people to be more successful."

19 According to DOCCS Under Custody data dated November 1, 2024, 40% of Shawangunk's population is aged 50 and over compared to 33% systemwide.

Mandated program enrollment

Ten respondents cited experiencing long waits to enroll in mandated programs, specifically ART and ASAT. Several recommended that the facility offer these programs earlier in their sentence, especially for people with long or life sentences. Four respondents noted that for individuals mandated to take ASAT and/or ART, FRP enrollment was conditioned upon completing those programs. Four respondents alleged that the facility discriminates against lifers and long-termers when deciding who can enroll in ART and ASAT and thus who can access the FRP. ILC and IGRC members reported that the facility prioritizes people with upcoming release dates for enrollment in mandated programs, while only a few spots are reserved for people with life sentences.

They also reported that at times there are open seats in ART that are left unfilled. The executive team explained that ART requires a five-day orientation and that sometimes participants will drop out during or after the orientation, leaving seats empty. They cannot fill those spots because any new participants would have missed orientation. According to DOCCS website, the program is "comprised of five modules consisting of 32 sessions."[20]

ILC and IGRC members recommended that the facility evaluate additional criteria when determining program enrollment, such as positive behavior reports and participation in additional programming such as college courses. ILC and IGRC members also recommended that ART and ASAT be offered virtually via tablet to increase enrollment capacity.

Low wages

Some respondents mentioned earning low wages (7 individuals), including some who described low wages in DOCCS overall and three who alleged their pay was being miscalculated based on their education level or years of experience. One respondent who worked in the kitchen stated, "[We make] pennies on the dollar...we're slaves unfortunately."

Staff-Incarcerated Individual Interactions

The proportion of respondents at Shawangunk who reported seeing or experiencing verbal, physical, or sexual abuse by staff is lower than in most maximum-security prisons in the sample.

At the meeting with the executive team, the superintendent expressed that staff, and incarcerated individuals have a great relationship. He said this is "the best population I've ever worked with." According to the superintendent, there is "a lot of civility" between incarcerated people and staff, "My staff give [respect], and they get it." The executive team stressed that both staff and incarcerated people de-escalate tense situations. The superintendent highlighted the success of DOCCS' "Season of Nonviolence" initiative. He said that 164 people

20 NYS DOCCS Aggression Replacement Training (ART) Program https://doccs.ny.gov/aggression-replacement-training-art-program

in the facility had signed up to participate in it, and all but five completed the program. The superintendent also said that he talks to the ILC almost daily and walks the hallways with his executive team so the representatives can alert them of any problems. He said that because of this practice, "nothing festers here."

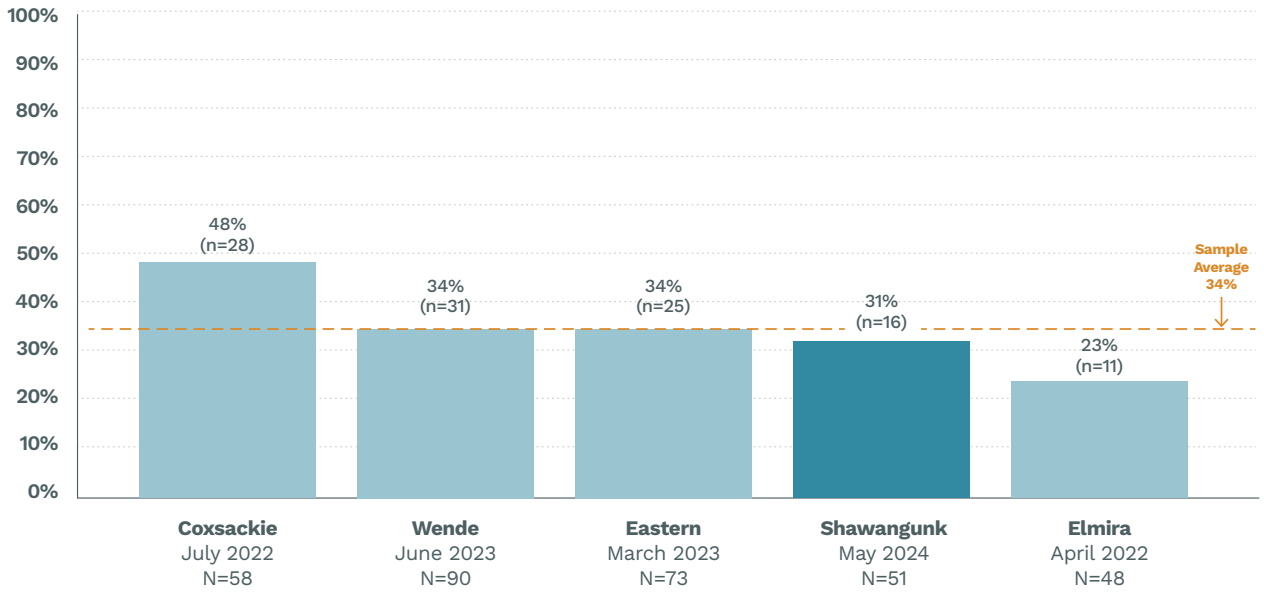
At the ILC/IGRC meeting, CANY was informed that in January 2023, the incarcerated population had lost faith in the role of the ILC because, despite the many attempts at raising concerns, the administration was not responsive. To demonstrate discontent, the ILC was disbanded, and its positions were vacant for ten months. It was reinstated in December 2023.

Mixed experiences with staff

Thirty-one percent (31%, 16/51) of respondents reported having seen or experienced verbal, physical, or sexual abuse by staff at Shawangunk, which is a lower share compared to most other maximum-security facilities in the sample.

Figure 9. Reports of Abuse by Staff

▶ % 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 Coxsackie and Elmira 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 at Shawangunk. When asked to elaborate on their experiences with staff, 44 respondents described satisfactory experiences, while 29 described unsatisfactory experiences. Five respondents provided positive reports about security officers and one respondent provided

a positive report about the executive team. Other respondents reported allegations of verbal abuse (17 respondents) and physical abuse (7 respondents). A few respondents also reported that staff write excessive misbehavior reports (4 respondents).

Positive experiences

- "Best jail in NYS system. No violence. Interaction with staff is good. It's more humanized."
- "[Shawangunk is] 1000% one of the better facilities, especially when it comes to officer-incarcerated people interactions."
- "Better communication between staff and [incarcerated individual] here than at Green Haven."
- "Staff is good here. Best COs I've been around my whole bid: Professional."

Negative experiences

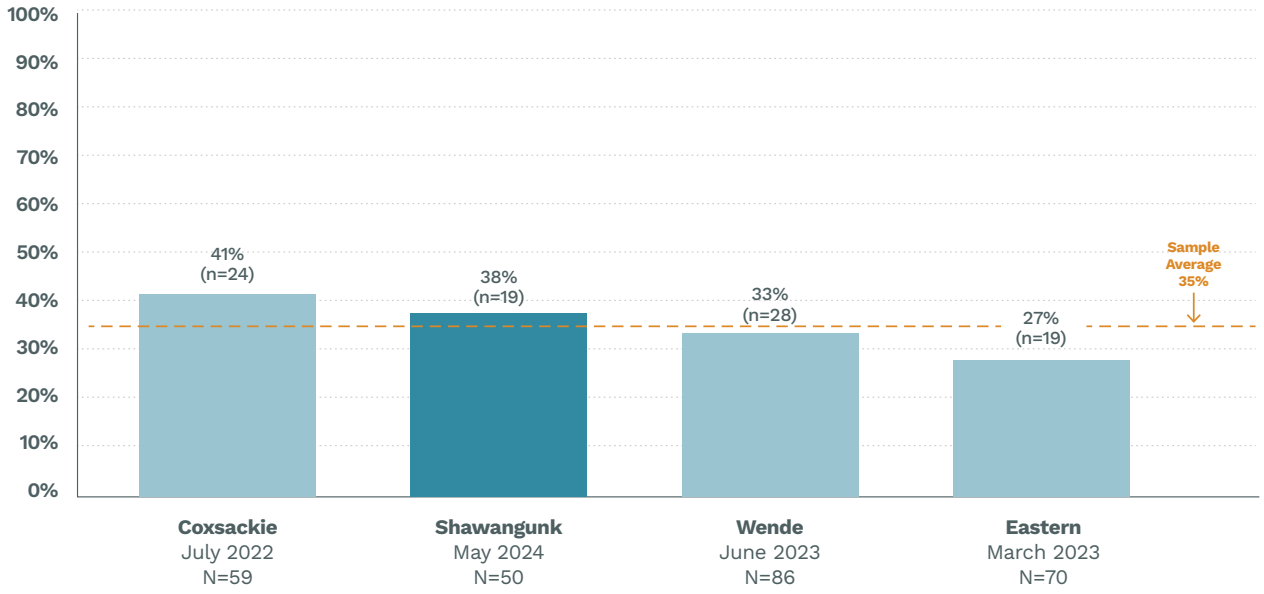
- "The jail is ok, but officers who are coming are making things difficult, because they want to replicate where they are coming from. Within one year, at minimum 10 rule changes—all petty and punitive."
- "Staff is tyrannical, they dehumanize people and makes them feel like less than."
- "[An] officer punched a guy in the face and stomped on him."
- "I've been here for one and a half months, it's pretty easy to be here. But the COs are petty, you get tickets for anything—the smallest, slightest thing."

Racialized Abuse

Despite a lower proportion of incarcerated people reporting verbal, physical, or sexual abuse, 38% (19/50) of respondents reported having seen or experienced racialized abuse by staff at Shawangunk, which is higher compared to two other maximum-security facilities in the sample.

Figure 11. Reports of Racialized Abuse

▶ % of respondents in GP units who reported seeing or experiencing racialized abuse (slurs, stereotyping, discrimination) by staff at the prison



▶ Notes: CANY asked "Have you seen or been personally subject to racialized abuse by staff at this prison?" at Coxsackie and "Have you seen or experienced racialized abuse (slurs, stereotyping, discrimination) by staff at this prison?" at Wende, Eastern, and Shawangunk. CANY did not ask a question about racial abuse at Elmira.

Some incarcerated individuals elaborated on their experiences with racialized abuse. One person said that “some officers do use slurs.” Another person said CANY should review the stored audio recording. He said, “all you guys have to do is listen to the tapes to see how abusive and disrespectful they [the officers] are.” Another person said that “the transgender folks are treated like they shouldn’t exist.”

Grievances

While the proportion of respondents at Shawangunk who reported filing grievances is the highest among all prisons in the sample, the proportion of respondents who reported that the grievance process is fair was the lowest among all prisons in the sample.

CANY representatives asked the executive team what the most common grievance categories filed at Shawangunk were. The executive team acknowledged that "[m]any grievances stem from staffing issues" and identified medical and the business office as the main sources of grievances. At the time of CANY's visit, there were 2.5 vacancies for nurses, but all the positions were being covered by agency staff. The ILC/IGRC members agreed that these departments have invited a lot of grievances but argued that the level of medical care was poor even when this department was well staffed. They said that often people must write grievances to get their issues taken seriously, and sometimes even that doesn't work.

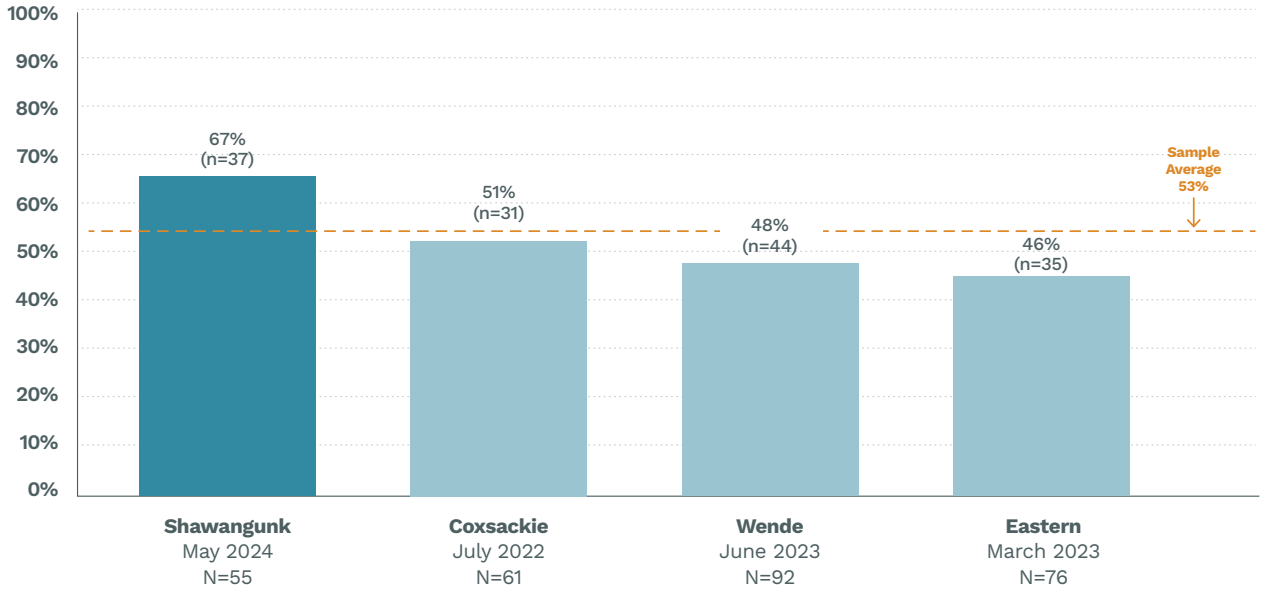
At the meeting with the IGRC supervisor, CANY learned that "a lot of grievances in medical are directed at the doctor." He also mentioned noticing that grievances started to come in regarding the business office when the steward left in 2022. He said that he has tried to resolve grievances informally, as most of them were about account issues. He described himself as very accessible: he can be reached via callouts, program runs and visiting people in their cells. When asked about filing grievances on the tablet, he agreed that it's a good idea but suggested that there should be a character limit, so the grievances are kept short and to the point.

Scope of use

Sixty-seven percent (67%, 37/55) of respondents reported having filed a grievance at Shawangunk, which is the highest share compared to all other maximum-security facilities in the sample.

Figure 12. Reports of Grievance System Usage

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

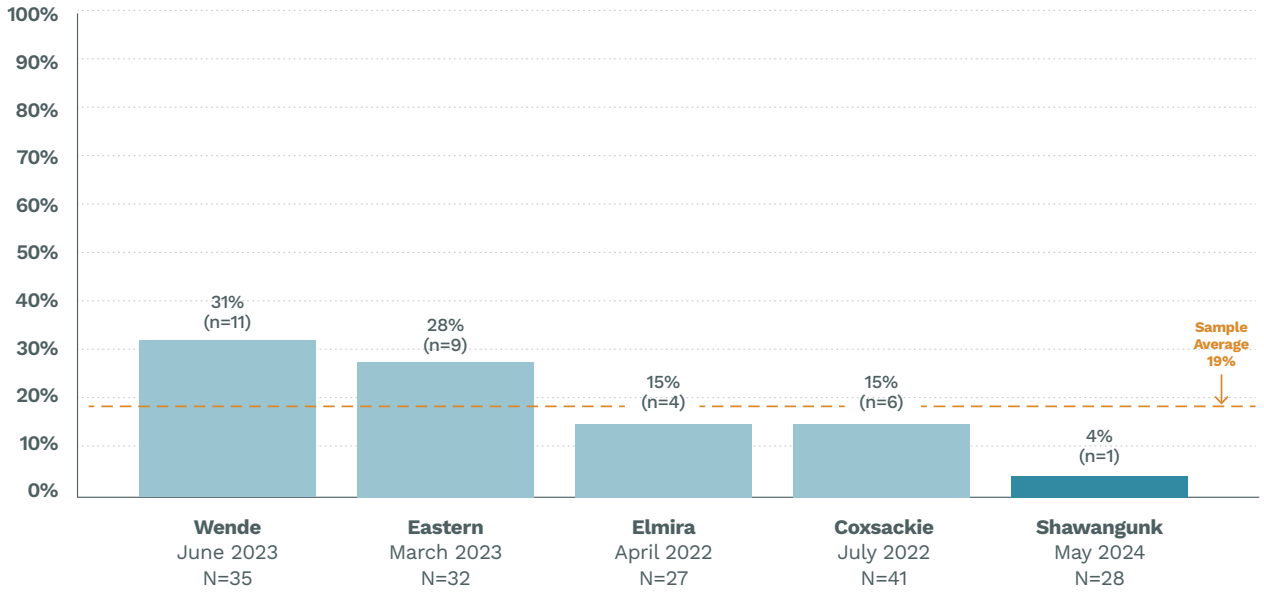


▶ Note: Excludes responses from Elmira, where CANY asked "Have you filed a grievance?"

DOCCS' latest semi-annual report, covering January through June 2024, showed that incarcerated people across the prison system filed 13,852 grievances. Of the 10,141 grievances filed in maximum security facilities, 234 were filed in Shawangunk. The grievances filed at Shawangunk during this period were related to Program Services (n=47), Health Services (n=63), Facility Operations (n=54), Administrative Services (n=30), Counsel (n=9), and Executive Direction (n=31).[21] According to a recent CANY analysis of IGP data in 2022, 500 grievances were filed at Shawangunk, a rate of 1133.8 per 1,000 incarcerated individuals. Shawangunk ranked seventh across all fifteen maximum security facilities in terms of the number of grievances filed per 1,000 incarcerated individuals.[22]

Figure 13. Perception of the Grievance Process

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



▶ Note: Excludes responses from Elmira, where CANY asked "Have you filed a grievance?"

Incarcerated people reported mistrust in the grievance program at Shawangunk. When asked to elaborate on their experiences with the grievance program, of the 41 respondents who answered questions about the grievance process, three expressed satisfactory experiences with the grievance process, while 25 reported unsatisfactory experiences. Seventeen individuals reported that the process was illegitimate or ineffective, four respondents reported retaliation by staff, and four reported avoiding the grievance process altogether. Only one respondent reported that he believed that the grievance process was fair.

21 DOCCS Report: https://doccs.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2024/10/incarcerated-grievance-program-semi-annual-report-jan-jun-2024_-final.pdf

22 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..

- "The grievance process is slow. Three weeks, then denied, and appealed to Albany."
- "[I] wouldn't waste the paper [to write a grievance]. I go straight to Albany."
- "Grievance system is horrible. It is biased."
- "I filed a grievance about the denial of ART/FRP. I feel like I got retaliated for this grievance."

Discipline

The proportion of respondents in Shawangunk who reported that the disciplinary system is fair is lower than in most other maximum-security prisons in the sample.

At the time of CANY's visit, there was no one housed in the SHU, which had eight operable cells. The superintendent said that the prison has among the lowest numbers of people in SHU in the state. When asked about the low levels of violence in the facility, the three officers working in the unit referenced the relationships built over time between long-serving staff and incarcerated people.

While Shawangunk does not have an RRU, it does have a General Population Restricted Unit (GPRU). This unit houses people who are SHU-ineligible, such as people 21 years of age or younger, 55 years of age and older, people with a disability, people who are pregnant or in the first eight weeks of postpartum, and incarcerated individuals with a serious mental illness.[23] At the time of CANY's visit, there were three people in this unit.

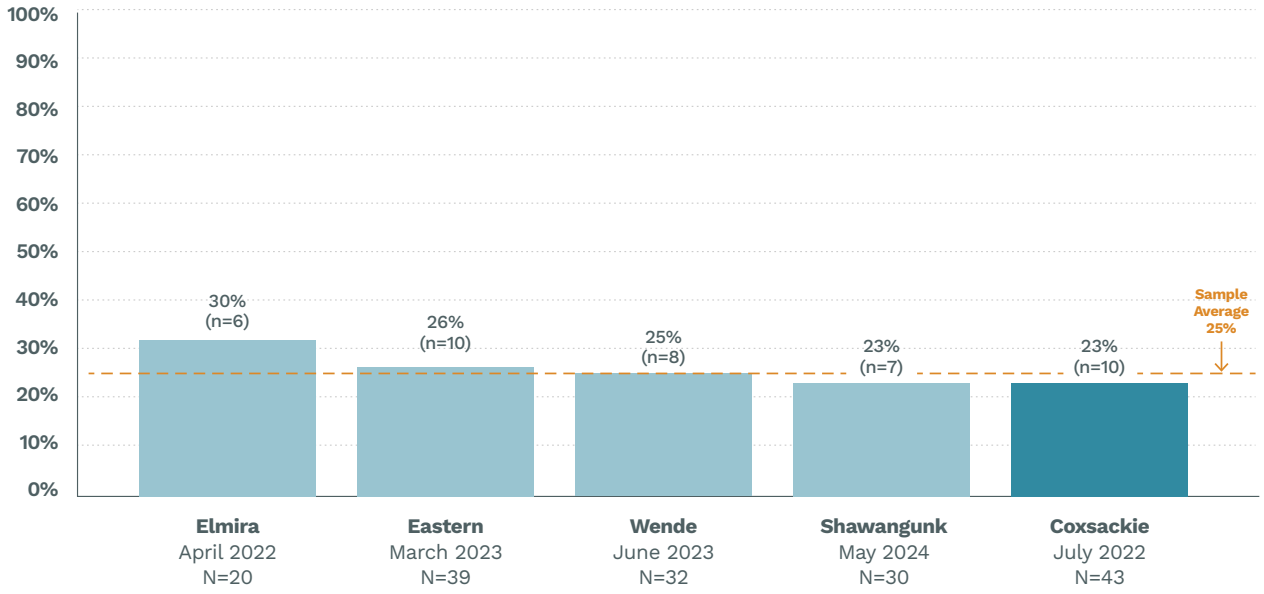
Perception of fairness

Despite reports of low levels of violence in the facility and opportunities for building relationships between staff and the incarcerated population, only 23% (7/30) of respondents reported that they believe the disciplinary system is fair at this prison, which is slightly lower than in most of the maximum-security facilities in the sample.

23 NYS. DOCCS Directive 4933 Special Housing Units (1.17.2024) https://doccs.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2024/11/4933.pdf

Figure 14. Perceptions of the Disciplinary System

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



When asked to elaborate on their experiences with the disciplinary system, six respondents described satisfactory experiences, while 26 described unsatisfactory experiences. Although some said that the discipline they received was proportional to the offense (3 respondents), others said that the discipline received was overly punitive (10 respondents). Three individuals alleged that people are always found guilty, no matter what.

- "I've been here for one and a half months, it's pretty easy to be here. But the COs are petty. You get tickets for anything—the smallest, slightest thing."
- "[I received] thirty days loss of everything.[24] Cameras work when they need it, but when we need it, it's not working."
- "The disciplinary process is one-sided. 95% are found guilty, you have to win on appeal."
- "Right or wrong, you are guilty—that is the end result."

24 When someone is found guilty of a disciplinary infraction, "the hearing officer may impose a loss of one or more specified privileges for a period of up to 60 days." This includes loss of phone, commissary, packages, or recreation. Correspondence and visiting may not be withheld. The phrase "thirty days loss of everything" refers to all privileges being withheld for 30 days. See DOCCS Directive 4932 pg. 19 https://doccs.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2025/02/4932.pdf

Material Conditions and Environmental Issues

The proportion of respondents at Shawangunk who reported that the prison is equipped with adequate temperature controls is the lowest among the prisons in the sample.

Shawangunk was built in 1985.[25] The facility consists of eight cellblocks each comprising two housing units. The units have a design that is distinct from other DOCCS facilities. Each unit features a central courtyard, dayroom, mess hall, and bathroom. The toilet in each cell is installed at the front and the seat is aligned parallel to the cell gate.

In the initial meeting with CANY, the executive team reported that they wanted to replace the housing unit windows facing the interior courtyard due to their broken panes because the insulating gas has leaked, making the windows foggy. This issue also came up in interviews with incarcerated people, who pointed out that the windows, which had been sealed shut, affected the airflow and temperature in the unit.

CANY representatives asked incarcerated people about the material and environmental conditions in their unit. Specifically, CANY representatives asked about temperature controls, access to clean drinking water, and the state of the facility's living areas. The interviews revealed that incarcerated people experience extreme temperatures in the housing units and that some distrust the facility's water. When discussing their living quarters, incarcerated people highlighted distinctive features and procedures: some of these were positive, like the availability of hot water and daily showers, while others were problematic, such as privacy concerns.

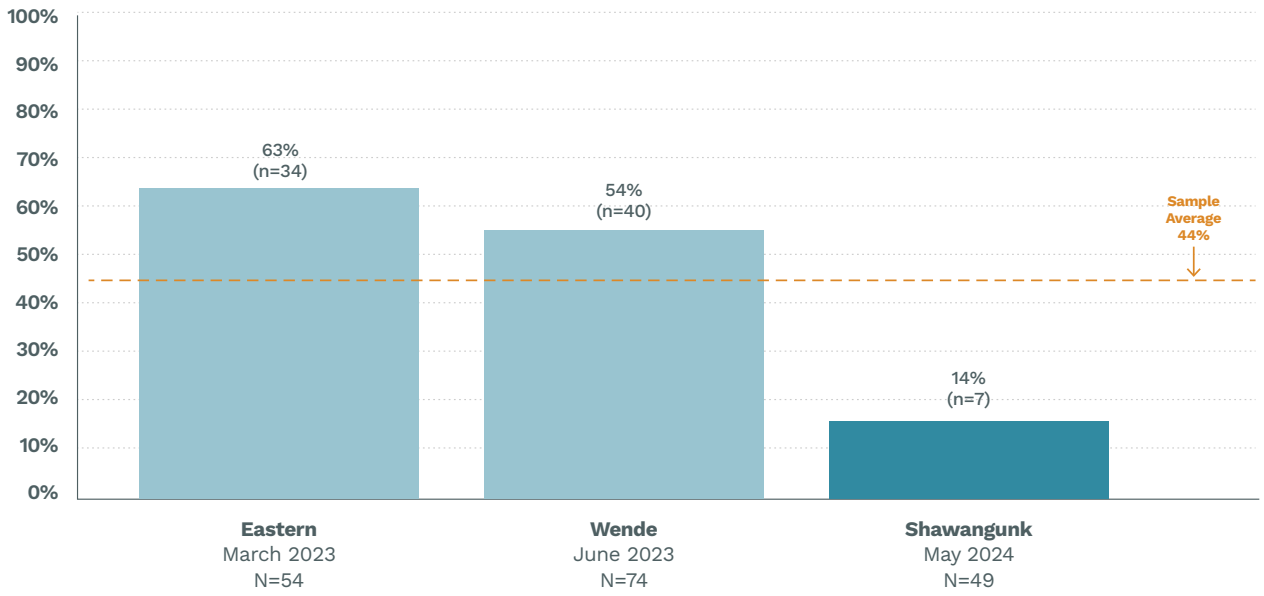
Temperature Control

Shawangunk does not have air conditioning but does have a ventilation system. In one-on-one interviews, CANY representatives asked respondents whether the temperature controls in the facility were adequate. Only 14% (7/49) of respondents reported that Shawangunk has adequate temperature controls for each season. This rate is lower compared to those at Eastern and Wende, the other maximum-security prisons where CANY representatives recently asked this question.

25 Shawangunk Executive Team. (2024, May 21). Initial Meeting with Executive Team. CANY.

Figure 15. Reports of Adequate Temperature Control

- % of respondents in GP units who reported the facility has adequate temperature controls for each season



- Note: CANY only asked this question at three maximum security facilities: Eastern, Wende, and Shawangunk.

Most of the respondents who elaborated on the facility's indoor climate characterized it as uncomfortable (38 respondents), stating that it is too hot in the summer (32 respondents) and too cold in the winter (9 respondents). Several respondents highlighted the lack of central air conditioning (19 respondents). Three of the respondents noted that the personal fans available for purchase in the commissary are too small to circulate the air in their cells. One of these respondents also noted that there are larger fans available for purchase in provider catalogs, but they are not allowed to purchase them.

- "It's hot, terribly hot in the summer."
- "It's hot, no ventilation."
- "It's hot...wintertime it's freezing."
- "No AC, extremely hot...hopefully they can get us some central air."
- "It's very hot...windows are welded shut. Not all windows open."

Relatedly, four respondents noted that certain windows were bolted shut, limiting airflow and intensifying the heat in the unit. CANY representatives observed this; many of the windows facing the courtyard had been sealed due to broken panes. One respondent explained that

the shuttered windows, along with the inadequate ventilation system, worsened the air quality in the unit, pointing out that birds had flown into the unit and left droppings near people's cells. An incarcerated person demonstrated to a CANY representative how no air was coming out of the vent by placing a piece of paper in front of the vent and showing that no movement occurred because no air was coming out.

It was hot at the time of CANY's visit. Per the Weather Channel's Almanac, temperatures in Wallkill, NY reached a high of 85- and 86-degrees Fahrenheit on the first and second days of the visit, respectively. CANY representatives felt the heat and stale air in the housing units. The heat intensified when sunlight streamed directly into the unit gallery. One CANY representative noted that the second floor of a unit was particularly hot and odorous; another that the heat made her feel nauseous.

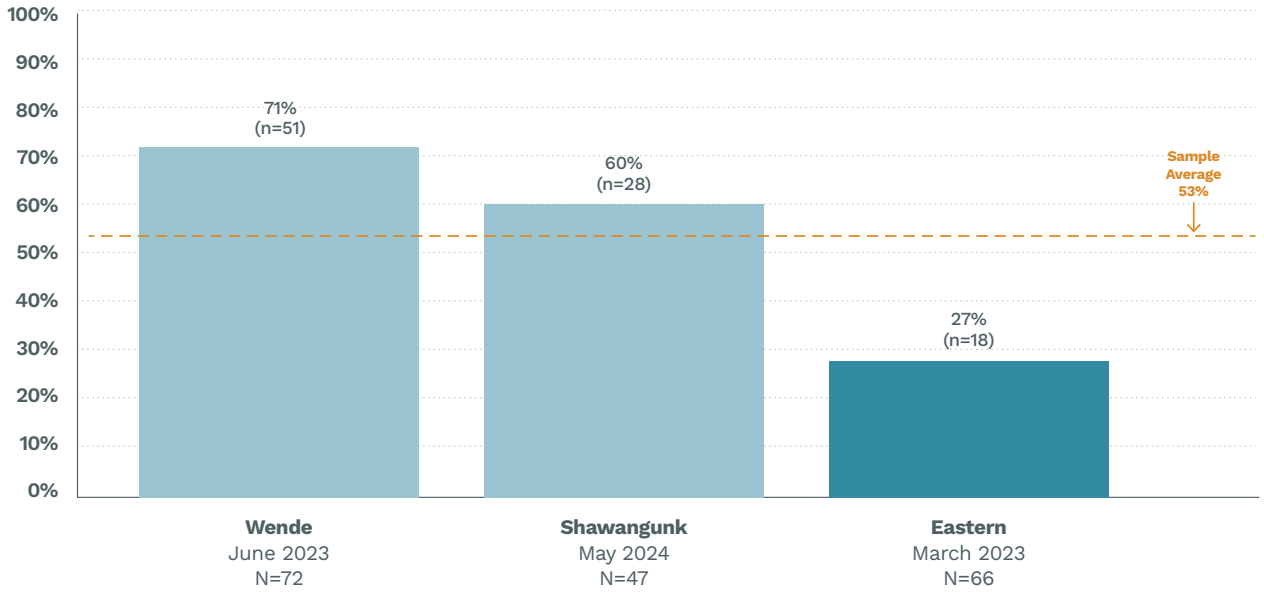
In their initial meeting with CANY, the executive team reported that they wanted to replace the windows in the housing units because their seals were broken. They explained that the repairs were necessary for security, stating that the foggy windows affect visibility. They did not mention the windows' effects on airflow when they presented the need for the project, but this project would likely improve air circulation as well.

Access to Clean Water

CANY representatives also asked respondents about the availability of clean drinking water. Most respondents (60%, 28/47) reported having access to clean drinking water outside of the commissary. However, nearly all the respondents who elaborated on the tap water in their interviews either expressed dissatisfaction with it, avoided it altogether, or described additional precautionary measures such as boiling it (18 respondents). Six of these respondents provided descriptions of the water, likening the smell to chlorine or stating that it is discolored. One respondent remarked, "To me none of this is clean…green stuff comes out in the cell." Another respondent explained that most people purchase their water: "[There's] sink water but nobody really drinks that. For the most part, everyone buys." A different respondent highlighted that bottled water is more expensive at Shawangunk compared to other facilities like Green Haven.

Figure 16. Reports of Access to Clean Drinking Water

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



Material Conditions

Forty-one respondents discussed the material conditions of their housing units in their interviews. Most of them—75% (31/41)—confirmed that the equipment and fixtures in their living area worked properly. A few of these respondents (four respondents) highlighted features that were rare in prison, like the availability of hot water in the cell— "Have hot water. We don't get that nowhere else"—or the opportunity to shower daily. The Department's directive on "the minimum standards with regard to those items necessary for an incarcerated individual's cleanliness, health, and morale" states that staff must afford incarcerated people an opportunity to shower at least three times per week. The superintendent cited the facility's daily shower schedule, which goes beyond the minimum standards codified in the directive, as an example of the commitment to a positive, humane environment.

Other respondents highlighted maintenance issues (11 respondents) and privacy concerns (three respondents) in the housing unit. Those who reported maintenance issues cited problems with the windows, as well as leaks, inoperable showers, and other plumbing issues. Maintenance staff shared related concerns with CANY, outlining the challenges they face in conducting their work across the facility. These challenges include difficulties in obtaining the necessary materials for repairs and staffing shortages, reporting there were four to five maintenance vacancies at the time of CANY's visit. Furthermore, they observed that delayed maintenance work impacts interpersonal relationships on the housing blocks by creating tension and, occasionally, driving conflict.

Those who focused on privacy concerns also found that these issues could escalate. These respondents noted that the toilets are at the front of the cell, close to the cell bars, and that their privacy curtains, intended to provide cover when people use the toilet, are too low. One respondent pointed out that this was a PREA concern, especially if female officers do not announce their presence in the unit. One respondent said, "They act like people are out of line for being on the toilet, lying on the bed in their boxers." Per the National PREA Standards for prisons and jails, facilities must implement policies and procedures that allow incarcerated people to "shower, perform bodily functions, and change clothing without nonmedical staff of the opposite gender viewing their breasts, buttocks, or genitalia."[26] More specifically, these policies and procedures must "require staff of the opposite gender to announce their presence when entering an inmate housing unit."[27] CANY representatives reported these concerns to the executive team at the end of the visit. The superintendent expressed appreciation to CANY for highlighting this issue, stated he would pass it along to the PREA Compliance Manager, and committed to investigating.

Staff Perspective

Shawangunk has an overall staffing vacancy rate of 17.6%, with higher rates of vacancies among program services (29%) and support services (20%). Union representatives and other staff noted that staffing shortages led to excessive overtime and low morale.

CANY reviewed DOCCS administrative data on staffing vacancy rates for Shawangunk, which showed that there was an overall vacancy rate of 17.6% or 67 positions as of January 1, 2024.[28] There were 44.5 vacant correction officer positions, 11.5 vacant positions in the programs services category, and eight positions in the support services category. At the time of CANY's monitoring visit, the executive team reported they were shorthanded by 46 correction officers. They were anticipating seven new officers by June 10, 2024. Some vacancies in medical and administrative categories were also raised.[29]

In addition to meeting with union representatives, CANY representatives held ad hoc conversations with security and civilian staff throughout the facility to get a better understanding of the experiences of staff working at Shawangunk. Staff conveyed challenges

26 United States Department of Justice. (2012). *Prison Rape Elimination Act Prisons and Jail Standards.* (Standard No. 115.15(d)). Retrieved from https://www.prearesourcecenter.org/sites/default/files/content/prisonsandjailsfinalstandards_0.pdf.

27 Ibid.

28 See CANY staffing Dashboard. This data is from a biweekly staffing report generated by the DOCCS budget office. https://www.correctionalassociation.org/data/dashboard-staffing

29 The executive team reported having only one doctor and looking to hire another one. They also stated they had four vacancies in the business office.

accompanying staffing shortages, such as excessive overtime and low morale. Concerns about delayed overtime and hazard pay were also raised.

Staff morale and culture

The superintendent expressed concern about the negative impacts of staffing shortages and cited efforts to boost morale by hosting barbecues for staff. The executive team also described positive relationships between staff and incarcerated individuals and the low numbers of unusual incidents, which they attributed to staff and incarcerated people's commitment to de-escalation. They reported that incarcerated individuals will intervene to stop fighting among incarcerated people. CANY reviewed DOCCS administrative data on unusual incidents and found that Shawangunk had the third lowest rate of incidents per 1,000 incarcerated individuals.[30]

Staffing shortages

In conversations with DOCCS staff, staff described various impacts of staffing shortages across the facility. Shortages in security, maintenance, and the business office were mentioned. These included frequently mandated overtime, delayed facility repairs, and delayed pay of overtime and hazard payment to staff due to shortages in the business office.

Mandatory overtime. Staff reported security staffing shortages leading to closing posts and mandatory overtime, asserting: "To properly staff this jail with the numbers we have, you have to work 60 hours per week." Staff noted that some people are working 115 hours per week. They estimated that between 10 and 12 posts are closed daily due to understaffing. In addition to 46 officer vacancies, staff estimated another 25 officers were out on leave. CANY reviewed data on workers compensation claims and found that Shawangunk generally has a lower rate of work-related incidents and time lost to workers' comp than other facilities.[31] They stated officers often work 16-hour double shifts and sometimes up to 21 hours if they need to go on a medical trip. Medical trips require security staff to remain at the hospital with the patient. They emphasized that medical trips exacerbate understaffing as there is only one transportation team. According to the DOCCS executive team, medical trips require two correction officers. One staff member gave an example that on the day of CANY's visit, they had five medical trips planned, which meant that they needed to find 11 people to fill those posts.

Maintenance. Staff also indicated that delayed maintenance repairs in housing units contribute to tension between incarcerated people and staff. One staff member illustrated this dynamic by using a broken toilet as an example. He said, over time, one broken toilet

30 Shawangunk had the third lowest rate of incidents per one thousand incarcerated individuals. Adirondack ranked second, and Hale Creek ranked first. See CANY Unusual Incidents Dashboard https://www.correctionalassociation.org/data/dashboard-unusual-incidents

31 According to data from the New York State Government Employees' Workers Compensation Claims reports, Shawangunk ranked 11th in lost workdays per full-time equivalent compared to other prisons. See CANY's Worker's Compensation Dashboard https://www.correctionalassociation.org/data/dashboard-workers-compensation.

could lead to overburdening other toilets and a hazardous situation in the housing unit if the toilet overflows. Staff place work orders and must wait for maintenance to address the situation. One staff member said, "So many domino effects just for a toilet."

Business Office. Staff reported that they had experienced delays in receiving overtime or hazard payments due to administrative staffing shortages. One staff member stated that someone had their shift changed as a result of filing a grievance about this problem, presumably in alleged retaliation. Additional concerns related to purchasing were raised, ranging from not paying the cable bill to delays in supplies needed for the barbering program, or replacement parts to fix the toilets.

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 Shawangunk. 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.

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, and (4) medical staff. 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 79 incarcerated individuals at Shawangunk. All interview respondents were housed in general population units, as no one was in the SHU at the time of the visit. Three interviews were conducted in the general population-restricted unit.

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 the facility which encompasses environmental conditions as well as basic services and entitlements (e.g., commissary, access to clean water, access to phones, etc.). The first and last questions in the protocol form are open-ended, making it possible for incarcerated people to discuss experiences and concerns that might not have come up otherwise.[32] Additionally, the protocol indicates 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 interview data was transcribed, CANY staff tabulated responses to closed-ended questions. To gauge whether the people's responses at Shawangunk mirror those at other maximum-security prisons, CANY compared close-ended responses collected on this visit to those collected at other maximum-security prisons CANY visited between April 2022 and May 2024, including Elmira, Coxsackie, Eastern, and Wende.[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

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.

34 CANY visited Elmira in April 2022, Coxsackie in July 2022, Eastern in March 2023, and Wende in June 2023.

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 Shawangunk's (1) executive team, (2) union representatives, (3) medical staff, (4) mental health staff, (5) ORC staff, (6) grievance supervisor, and (7) the ILC and the IGRC. 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 debrief meeting at the conclusion of the visit. At the debrief meeting, CANY representatives outlined and asked questions about their initial impressions of conditions at Shawangunk. 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 in Appendix B.

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).

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: Impressions from Monitoring Visit

Below are the initial impressions from the visit to Shawangunk 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) staff-incarcerated individual interactions, (2) Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), (3) business office, (4) medical, and (5) programming and education. A version of these impressions was also emailed to DOCCS' central office and mailed to the ILC and IGRC groups following the visit.

Debrief Summary

Staff-Incarcerated Individual Interactions

- **Responsiveness.** CANY representatives heard positive feedback from incarcerated individuals about attentiveness and access to the executive team.
- **Respect.** Incarcerated people reported positive interactions with staff, saying that officers treat them with respect.
- **Violence.** CANY representatives heard little to no allegations of violence in the facility. Incarcerated people talked about helping to de-escalate issues in an effort to keep the violence to a minimum at the facility.

PREA

- **Privacy.** Incarcerated people shared concerns regarding privacy when in their cells. Some concerns involved female officers not announcing themselves in the unit and getting tickets for using a privacy curtain when using the toilet in their cell.
- **A PREA allegation was shared with the executive team.** The superintendent and his team said they would investigate all the concerns raised by CANY.

Business Office

- **Purchasing and Accounts Payable.** CANY representatives heard concerns from both incarcerated individuals and staff regarding delays and problems with purchasing and disbursement. These concerns impact all aspects of the facility including hazard and overtime pay for staff, commissary item orders, toiletries such as soap, toilet paper, and toothpaste for housing units, and inaccurate account balances for ILC and other organizations.
- The executive team shared that they would be moving someone from state shop to work in this area and that Albany would be providing training for staff working in the unit.

Medical

- **Unprofessional behavior.** CANY representatives heard many concerns about the current doctor and the level of care at the facility. The executive team reported that they are in the process of hiring another doctor who they hope will address these concerns.
- **Medications.** Incarcerated individuals reported incidents of medication and treatment given to the wrong patients.
- **Specialty Care.** Incarcerated people reported long wait times for specialty care appointments—incarcerated people alleged the doctor will not make referrals—and long wait times to get results from specialty care appointments. One person said it took four months to get his results.

Programming and Education

- **Family Reunion Program (FRP).** CANY representatives heard positive feedback about FRP. CANY representatives visited one of the trailers used by incarcerated people and their families during these visits and observed the amenities available, including a playground and barbecue area.
- **Mandated Programs.** Incarcerated individuals serving life sentences shared concerns about not being able to participate in FRP because they cannot access ART or ASAT programs. Incarcerated individuals said that despite their good behavior and participation in other programs, they are ineligible for FRP because they cannot get into a mandated ART or ASAT program since priority is given to people with an earliest release date.
- **College.** CANY representatives observed high participation in the college program. CANY representatives dropped in on a college class that had every seat occupied. Incarcerated people seemed engaged and excited about their upcoming graduation.
- **General Library.** CANY representatives walked through the library space and asked about the availability of programs and services for incarcerated people. CANY representatives heard about tutoring by college program graduates helping people with low reading levels, a book club, and a SUNY speaker series.
- **Law Library.** CANY representatives observed high participation in the law library. CANY representatives raised with the executive team concerns related to inoperable computers in the law library. Incarcerated people said gaining access to Microsoft products (i.e., Word) in the law library computers would help them as they worked on their cases.
    - The superintendent shared that he had spoken to IT, and they were going to order the part needed to address the inoperable computer concerns.

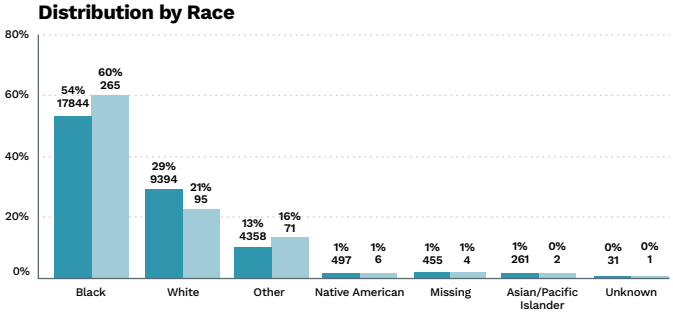
Appendix C: Snapshot of Demographic Data

Population Demographics as of May 1, 2024 | Shawangunk Correctional Facility

	Systemwide Population	Shawangunk
	32822	444

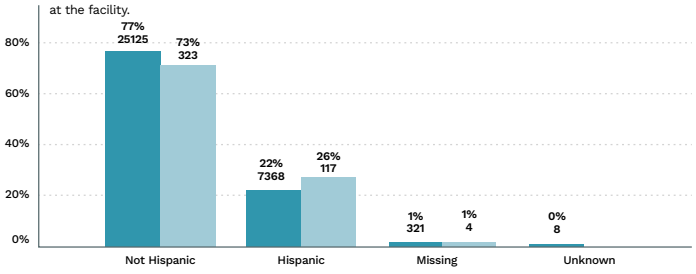
Systemwide Population Shawangunk Population

Distribution by Race

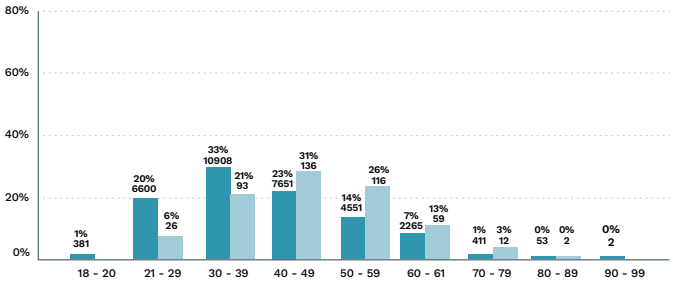


Distribution by Ethnicity

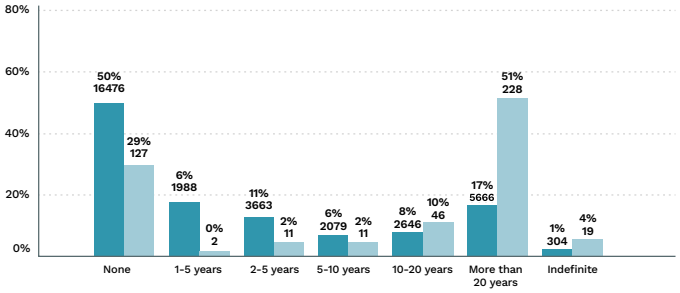
Units names are taken from DOCCS' under custody data, which does not include an exhaustive list of units at the facility.



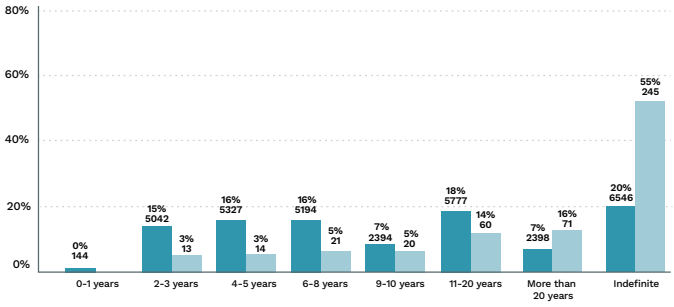
Distribution by Age



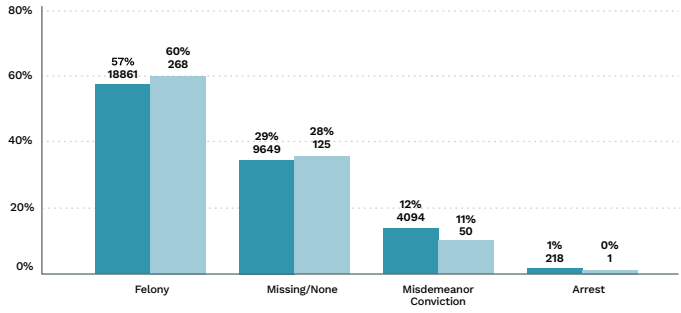
Distribution by Minimum Sentence



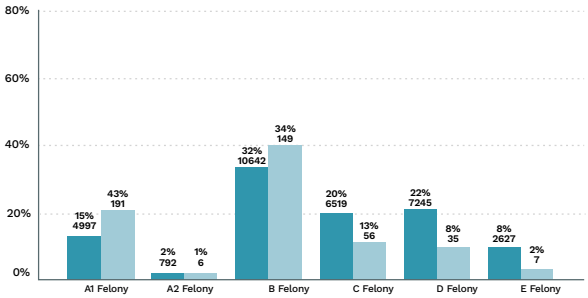
Distribution by Maximum Sentence



Distribution by Most Serious Prior Offense

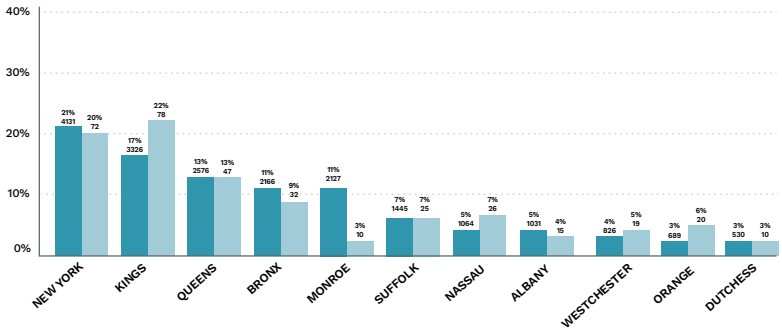


Distribution by Crime Class



Distribution by Commitment County (Most Serious Offense)

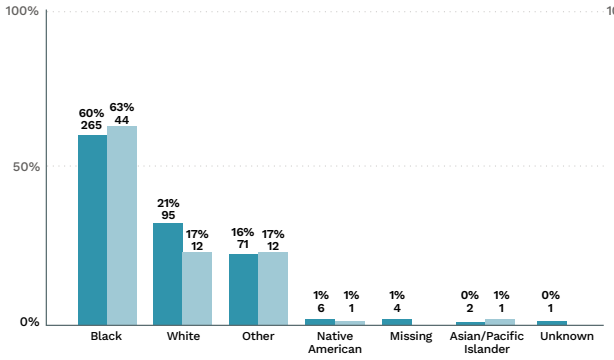
Includes Only Top 10 Commitment Counties Among Incarcerated People at Woodbourne



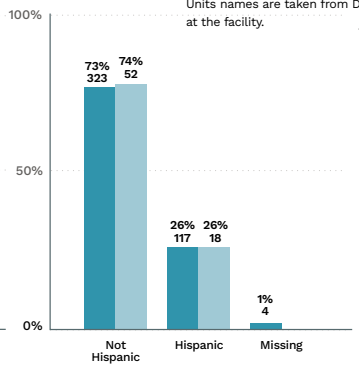
Population Demographics as of May 1, 2024 | Shawangunk Correctional Facility

	Shawangunk Population	Interview Sample
Shawangunk	444	70
Incarcerated People Interviewed by CANY (valid DINS only)		

Distribution by Race

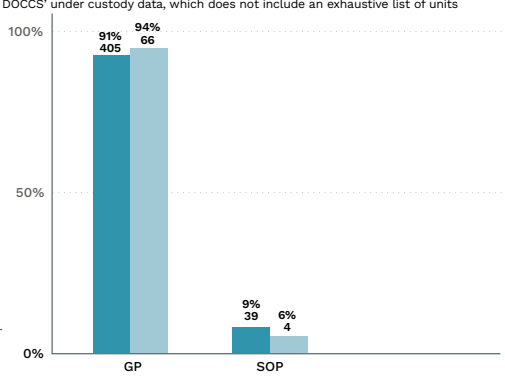


Distribution by Ethnicity

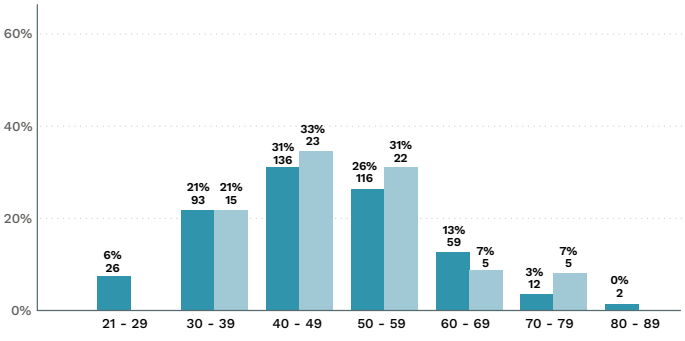


Distribution by Unit/Building Code

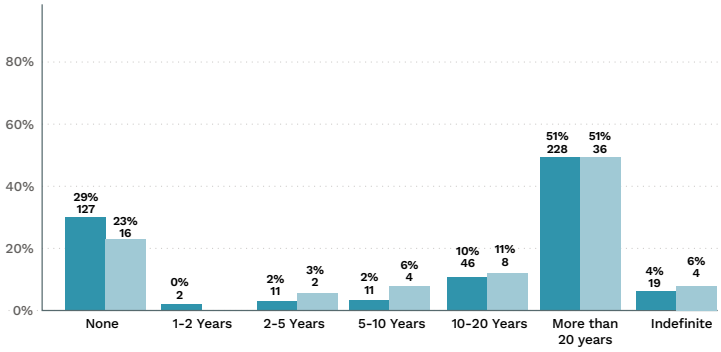
Units names are taken from DOCCS' under custody data, which does not include an exhaustive list of units at the facility.



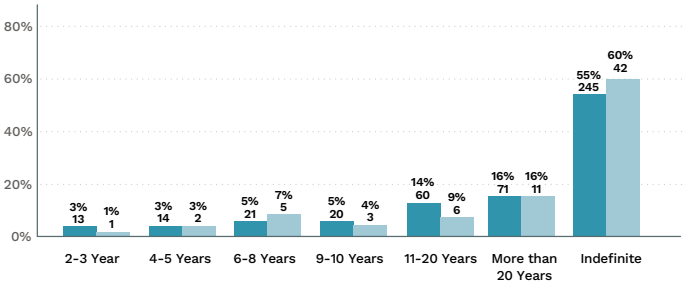
Distribution by Age



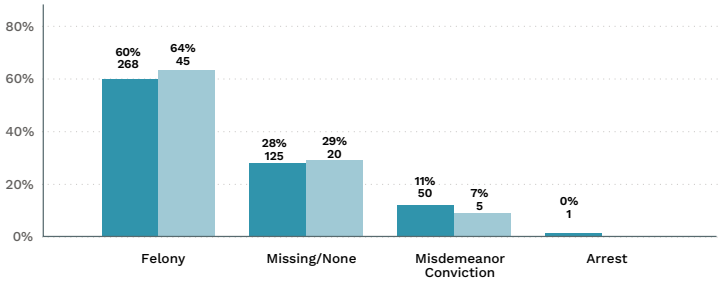
Distribution by Minimum Sentence



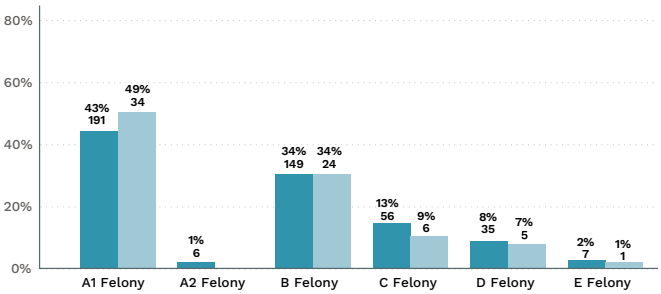
Distribution by Maximum Sentence



Distribution by Most Serious Prior Offense

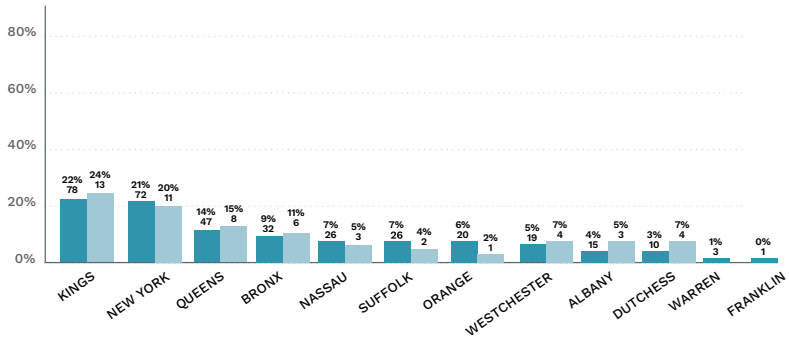


Distribution by Crime Class



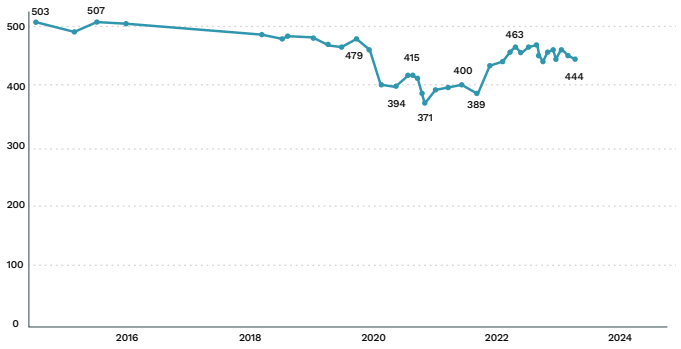
Distribution by Commitment County (Most Serious Offense)

Includes only top 10 commitment counties amount incarcerated people at Woodbourne



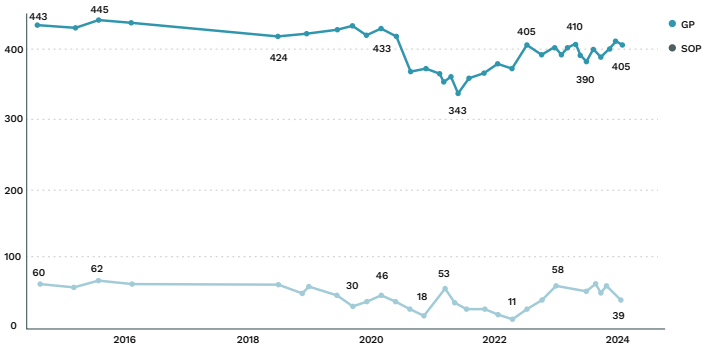
Population Demographics as of May 1, 2024 | Shawangunk Correctional Facility

Facility Population Over Time

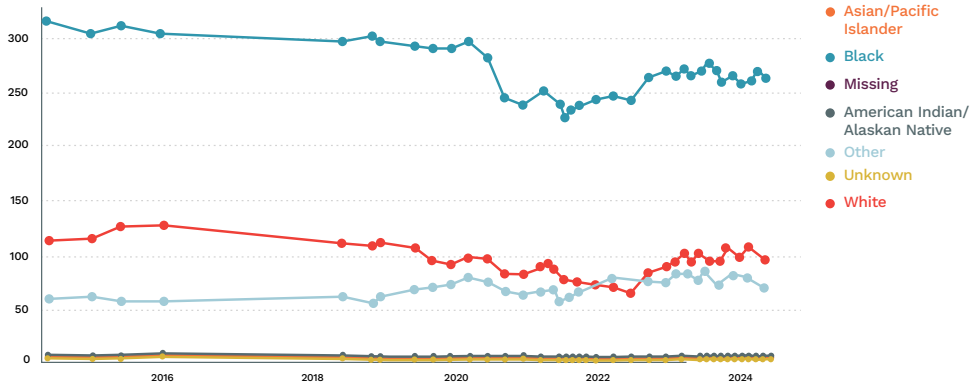


Facility Population Over Time by Unit

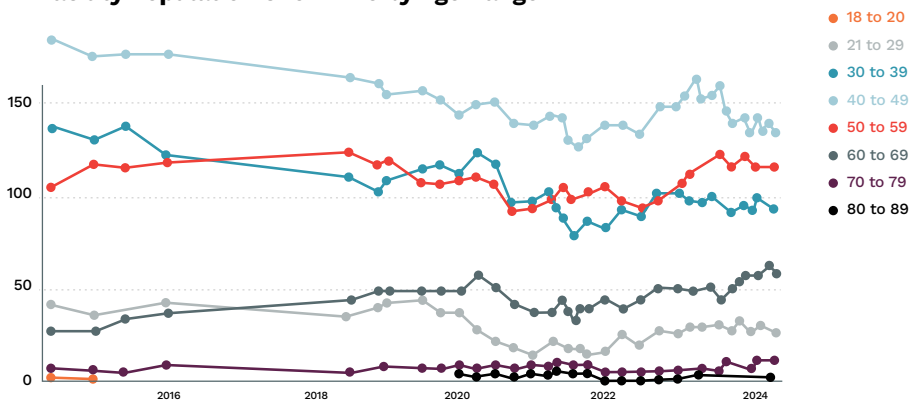
Units names are taken from DOCCS' under custody data, which does not include an exhaustive list of units at the facility.



Facility Population Over Time by Race



Facility Population Over Time by Age Range



Appendix D: Data Addenda

Shawangunk 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?	11	24%	34	76%	45	100%
	Are you able to access items from packages in a timely manner?	30	67%	15	33%	45	100%
	Are you receiving three meals per day in adequate portions?	44	98%	1	2%	45	100%
	Are you able to make phone calls, either by using the phones or through a tablet?	53	100%	0	0%	53	100%
	Do you have access to in-person visits?	49	100%	0	0%	49	100%
Healthcare	If you requested medical care, have you received a response?	46	84%	9	16%	55	100%
	If you requested dental care, have you received a response?	32	82%	7	18%	39	100%
	Do you have unaddressed medical or dental needs?	23	47%	26	53%	49	100%
	Have you experienced or witnessed an emergency medical or mental health situation in this prison?	32	70%	14	30%	46	100%
Mental Health Care	Are you on the OMH caseload?	5	9%	48	91%	53	100%
	Have you attempted to hurt yourself in this prison?	1	2%	40	98%	41	100%
Staff-Incarcerated Individual Interaction	Have you seen or experienced verbal, physical, or sexual abuse by staff at this prison?	16	31%	35	69%	51	100%
	Have you seen or experienced racialized abuse by staff (slurs, stereotyping, discrimination, etc.) at this prison?	19	38%	31	62%	50	100%
Grievance	Have you filed a grievance at this prison?	37	67%	18	33%	55	100%
	Is the grievance process fair?	1	3%	28	97%	29	100%
Discipline	Have you been subject to discipline at this prison?	32	65%	17	35%	49	100%
	Is the disciplinary system fair?	7	23%	23	77%	30	100%
	Have you ever been locked inside your cell for more than 17 hours a day?	16	32%	34	68%	50	100%

Issue Area	Question	Yes		No		Total	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Material Conditions and Environmental Issues	Do you have clean drinking water outside of the commissary?	28	60%	19	40%	47	100%
	Does this prison have adequate temperature controls for each season (i.e., cooling in the summer, heat in the winter)?	7	14%	42	86%	49	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?	15	36%	24	57%	3	7%	42	100%
	If you received dental care, was the level of care adequate?	23	72%	8	25%	1	3%	32	100%
	Are you receiving medication as prescribed, including schedule and dosage?	27	50%	16	30%	11	20%	54	100%
Mental Health Care	Are you getting the mental health programs you need?	6	18%	5	15%	23	68%	34	100%
Programming and Recreation	Are you able to enroll in the academic and vocational programs you need?	39	71%	8	15%	8	15%	55	100%

Table 3. Responses to Questions About Timeliness of Health Care

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%	1	8%	3	23%	7	54%	13	100%
If yes, how long did it take to get medical care?	18	47%	1	3%	1	3%	1	3%	17	45%	38	100%
If no, how long has your dental request been outstanding?	1	17%	2	33%	0	0%	0	0%	3	50%	6	100%
If yes, how long did it take to get dental care?	11	42%	6	23%	1	4%	2	8%	6	23%	26	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?	0	0%	3	14%	1	5%	2	9%	6	27%	10	45%	22	100%

Appendix E: DOCCS Response

NEW YORK STATE | 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 May 30, 2025, is in response to CANY's two-day visit to Shawangunk 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).

Shawangunk Correctional Facility is a well-run maximum-security facility located in Ulster County suitable for the confinement of males 18 years of age or older of any security classification. Shawangunk Correctional Facility consists of single-occupancy cells, a Special Housing Unit (SHU), an Infirmary, and a wheelchair-accessible unit.

BASIC PROVISION OF SERVICES

Issue(s) Identified: Incarcerated individuals expressed concerns related to commissary provisions, access to nutritious meals, clean water, and temperature controls.

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.

Incarcerated individuals at Shawangunk Correctional Facility are supplied with an updated "out of stock" sheet daily from the Business Office. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the individual to review the "out of stock" sheet prior to placing their order. If an item is not listed on the "out of stock" sheet for any reason, the individual is afforded a substitute item. As of May 7, 2025, the daily "out of stock" sheet at Shawangunk Correctional Facility indicates 31 (19 food and 12 non-food) items were unavailable. This amount represents approximately 9% of the roughly 340 items listed on the commissary buy sheet. As Shawangunk Correctional Facility also services Wallkill Correctional Facility, stock level and reordering points are set up in a manner that accommodates the population at both facilities. Currently, the Acting Head Account Clerk does the ordering on a weekly basis by utilizing a "min/max system." If items are found to be "running out"

frequently, the "min/max" is adjusted to ensure more products are being ordered. Additionally, the business office staff at Shawangunk Correctional Facility routinely make efforts to identify items from alternate vendors when certain items may remain “out of stock” for an extended period. Business office staff have also indicated that they currently offer seven different fresh produce options and are working with the Incarcerated Liaison Committee (ILC) to make changes suggested by the current population. Additionally, personal hygiene items are distributed by security staff on a once per month schedule. The standard issue is five rolls of toilet paper, three bars of soap, and one tube of toothpaste with consideration of additional supplies if needed. Hygiene items offered in the commissary are just meant to supplement these provisions. 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.

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 suitable for gauging flavor profiles. The incarcerated population have 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. Incarcerated individuals are encouraged to use Form 1545, Food Service Questionnaire Quarterly Report with their facility ILC, to voice their concerns about menu items. 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.

Shawangunk Correctional Facility follows all recipes as written. Meals involving rice are generally not mixed. The few that are mixed are done so in accordance with the recipe. The mess hall and kitchen are subject to outside inspections from the local municipalities' Department of Health annually, as well as quarterly inspections from the Regional Coordinator for Correctional Food Service (RCCFS), and the annual Sanitation and Hygiene Audit conducted by a Central Office specialist. This ensures food is prepared according to Department protocols, recipes are followed, and correct portions are used. The Food Production Center (FPC) utilizes food-safe packaging that conforms to industry standards for storing, heating, and serving food items. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides oversight of our bagged products, which includes how they are packaged, labeled, stored and shipped, and ensures that FPC products are safe for consumption by those in our custody, applying the same standards as other secure facilities outside of the Department.

All menus are made by Nutritional Services for the appropriate caloric intake of 2800 calories/90 grams of protein. Per Directive #4311, “Therapeutic Diet Manual”, incarcerated individuals that need a special diet must be assessed by the medical department and if deemed medically appropriate will be prescribed a therapeutic diet and food service will be informed. The DOCCS menu offers a non-meat

option with each meal. Fresh fruits and vegetables are available several times each week. The general population menu offers extra portions with many meals. Incarcerated individuals with concerns about weight gain must use their discretion when selecting their portions, with consideration to their needs and activity levels.

Potable water service to Shawangunk Correctional Facility is provided by Wallkill Correctional Facility Water Treatment Plant, which serves approximately 2,000 people. The water source is groundwater wells drawn from the Wallkill Aquifer located east of Wallkill Correctional Facility. The water is treated via membrane filtration for turbidity and iron removal, soda ash addition for pH adjustment, chlorine for disinfection, and orthophosphate addition for corrosion control and iron sequestering. The most recent water quality report "Annual Drinking Water Quality Report 2024 - Wallkill/Shawangunk Correctional Facility Water Supply System" is published and available for review to the incarcerated population. The water was tested for the contaminants copper, lead, nitrate, barium, and nickel. The water is further tested for the following potential byproducts of chlorine addition: THM, HAA, THM, and HAA. No exceedances of contaminants or byproducts occurred during the most recent water quality sampling. Shawangunk Correctional Facility is in full compliance with all New York State Department of Health regulatory requirements for potable water standards.

Regarding temperature controls, the windows at Shawangunk Correctional Facility can be opened for a cross breeze when permitted by the weather. A sitewide energy upgrade project is set to begin this year at Shawangunk Correctional Facility that includes measures to address ventilation throughout the facility. Such measures include the installation of demand-controlled ventilation and variable frequency drives, which represent an improvement over the current aged mechanical ventilation equipment. Additionally, a facility-wide window replacement project has been put into Shawangunk's capital forecast; this project will address the deteriorating visibility of the windows and faulty operation of the units.

PROGRAMMING

Issue(s) Identified: Incarcerated individuals expressed concerns related to program offerings, access, and wages, visitor processing and Family Reunion Program eligibility.

Response: Shawangunk 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 programing for incarcerated individuals. The Department takes a proactive approach to minimizing idle time by utilizing the skills and resources available within the incarcerated population.

The Department regularly evaluates and reviews the vocational programming at all facilities to help provide opportunities to incarcerated individuals upon release. The General Business program provides

training in general computer operation, word processing, desktop publishing, business communications, and includes multiple industry-recognized computer-based certifications that provide opportunity when pursuing employment. Moreover, the Division of Education is also in regular communication with outside partners to evaluate industry needs to ensure that future programming opportunities meet the needs of the workforce. Shawangunk Correctional Facility also offers college programs to prepare those engaged for a successful reentry.

The current rate at which aggression control programs are offered appears to meet the needs of the incarcerated population. The five-day orientation for Aggression Replacement Training (ART) participants is not required. Currently, five days before the program is scheduled to begin, potential participants are advised they will be assigned to a group. If any refuse the assignment, this allows time for additional individuals to be considered. Based on the closed group format of the class, if an individual drops out after the group begins, that slot cannot be filled, as each module builds off the last, making it mandatory to attend the program from the beginning. ART is not intended to be an independent study course via the tablet. The best practice for the most meaningful experience is for groups to be conducted in person with experiential activities for the participants to practice skills being taught and interactive discussions with peers and facilitator.

All persons entering a correctional facility are subject to search as a condition of participating in the visitation program. Appropriate participation in the visitor program provides incarcerated individuals opportunities to maintain relationships with friends and relatives and to promote better community adjustment upon release. Directive #4403, "Incarcerated Individual Visitor Program", provides for a uniform manner for the operation of the program, and provides guidance for staff, the incarcerated population, and visitors. This includes not routinely requiring a visitor to remove religious headwear during search procedures. However, if staff determine following the use of the hand scanner that removal of the headwear or any other item of religious apparel is necessary, the item shall be removed in a private area. Similarly, the Family Reunion Program (FRP) operates in accordance with Directive #4500, "Family Reunion Program." It should be noted this program is a privileged program, offered in a limited supervised setting. As this program provides unsupervised access to family members, a thorough and individualized review is conducted for eligibility. This includes a review of the incarcerated individual's programming, criminal history, custodial adjustment, and previously established relationship with the requested participants. Concerns about awaiting assignment to programs for the purpose of participating in FRP are regularly addressed by facility staff. The Deputy Superintendent for Programs (DSP) has discretion to front-load individuals into programs as appropriate. This practice is utilized when it does not negatively impact other individuals' liberty issues. Currently, there are four (4) participants who were frontloaded into the Moderate Aggression cycle. For many applicants, when reasonable and appropriate, previous program participation is considered to satisfy eligibility requirements for FRP. While Required Program Lists (RPL) vary by facility, the DSP at each facility has the discretion to manage the RPL in an equitable manner that minimizes impacts on liberty interests.

The Law Library at Shawangunk Correctional Facility is operating in the normal course[1]. The Law Library provides resources for legal research, preparation of legal papers, notary services,

[1] The Law Library is located on the ground level; there are no stairs to get to the unit.

photocopying legal materials for a fee, typing services, and provision of legal writing supplies. Legal assistance services are available to incarcerated individuals who are unable to do their own legal work. Incarcerated individuals who are law clerks and have been certified through a department-sponsored legal research course provide these legal assistance services or refer individuals to free legal service organizations in the community.

Regarding wages, the Department's budget is fixed and subject to legislative approval. Although incarcerated wages have remained stable for several years, an increase has not been enacted. A review of the Food Services payroll at Shawangunk Correctional Facility reflects that incarcerated individuals who are participating in the program are being paid in accordance with the Food Service Operations Manual. Individuals are encouraged to write to the Program Committee Chairperson with individual concerns about their pay rates not aligning with current policies.

FACILITY OPERATIONS

Issue(s) Identified: Incarcerated individuals allege having mixed experiences with staff; concerns of privacy; package deliveries, and administrative staffing.

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. Shawangunk 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, 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 Shawangunk 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 staff have their BWC powered on and activated when required. The Department has recently expanded Directive #4943, "Body-Worn Camera (BWC)," to require BWC activation whenever a staff member comes in contact with incarcerated individuals and has implemented 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). Additionally, Executive Team members make frequent rounds to interact with the staff and the incarcerated population to provide an opportunity to raise and address concerns. Further, the OSI Hotline is available to all allow for an environment where mixed experiences with staff may be reported, investigated, and addressed.

Regarding privacy concerns raised by incarcerated individuals, there are several reporting mechanisms in place under the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) designed to encourage incarcerated individuals to come forward with any allegations of misconduct. Consistent with the governing Federal regulations and Department policies, staff of an opposite-gender are required to announce their presence on a unit at the beginning of their tour. If a male officer is working the housing unit, a female will make an announcement upon entering the housing unit.

Their observations of incarcerated individual's incidental to routine cell checks are permitted. Incarcerated individuals are permitted to cover the bottom portion of the cell gate while using the toilet or returning from the shower. At no time is the covering extend above the feed-up hatch. For the safety of staff and the incarcerated population, it is prohibited for them to obstruct the visibility into their cell. In July 2024, an independent auditor determined Shawangunk Correctional Facility to be in compliance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act standards, which may be viewed: https://doccs.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2024/07/shawangunk-correctional-facility-final-prea-audit-report-7.14.2024.pdf

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.

Administrative staffing in the business office has been bolstered since the CANY visit with the promotion of a payroll examiner and the addition of an employee absorbed from consolidation. This has provided resolution to the complaints of untimely shift changes; hazard duty report submissions, and allocating resources to ministerial functions such as Disbursements and Commissary. Staff changes in the purchasing area resulted in one (1) cable bill being missed and resolution was immediate. All purchases are in compliance with New York State Finance Law and Office of the New York State Comptroller procurement guidelines.

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, 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. Regarding complaints of difficulties communicating with providers; support staff and nurses assist patients by either reviewing the information discussed after the encounter or sitting in on the visit when staffing levels allow. Concerns about the attitude and demeanor of the medical staff should be addressed through the established processes at Shawangunk 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.

Emergency medical care is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week and scheduled sick call is available four days a week, along with on-site clinical services five days a week at Shawangunk

Correctional Facility. Additionally, Mobility Assistants or "pushers" are available to the individuals in the wheelchair unit. Currently, there are 11 Mobility Assistants to help the wheelchair-bound individuals get to the areas they need to go to, including medical call-outs. Any incarcerated individual who believes they require an accommodation can complete a Reasonable Accommodation Request form at any time. The program committee has and continues to evaluate any additional needs for more mobility assistants and will add them when deemed necessary.

Primary care providers review the results of any diagnostic test ordered by the Department. At the time of review, the primary care provider will stamp the diagnostic test, which will indicate the appropriate action to be taken, and patients are notified of the results in writing. Should a patient have an inquiry or concern about test results, they can inform medical staff through the sick call process. The Department follows the recommendations of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force for colorectal cancer screening. Patients meeting the criteria for colorectal cancer screening are set up for a colonoscopy with an outside specialist. It should be noted that the Department makes every effort to bring as many providers on site as possible; however, some specialty visits require evaluations in the specialist's office.

In the Fall of 2024, Shawangunk Correctional Facility hired an additional doctor who has been a welcome addition to the medical staff; this has reduced the wait time for patients to see their medical provider. As for nursing items, Shawangunk Correctional Facility has 6 of their 8 budgeted Registered Nurse items filled and is using agency and extra service nursing staff to cover vacant shifts. A dentist was recently hired to replace the former dentist who had retired. Also, Shawangunk Correctional Facility is in the process of purchasing new equipment for the dental unit.

The Medication Addiction Treatment (MAT) program continues to run smoothly at Shawangunk Correctional Facility, and new patients are started on the program following screening, evaluation and diagnosis of a substance-use disorder.

MENTAL HEALTH

Issue(s) Identified: Incarcerated individuals expressed concerns of quality and access to mental health services.

Response: Shawangunk Correctional Facility is a level 2 mental health facility that provides and promotes a safe environment that is conducive to rehabilitation for the incarcerated population with outpatient treatment for individuals in general population. The incarcerated individuals at Shawangunk Correctional Facility are deemed psychiatrically stable by the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) to function in such an environment. Clinical mental health services are provided by OMH. At the time of the CANY visit, OMH staffed Shawangunk Correctional Facility with one full-time, and one part-time clinician for a caseload of approximately 39 individuals. OMH providers are responsible for assessing and prescribing medications to individuals, and DOCCS medical staff facilitates the distribution of such medication to the incarcerated population. There is a positive and open line of communication between DOCCS and OMH staff at Shawangunk Correctional Facility. The Department continuously seeks to find new ways to provide staff with additional mental health and suicide

prevention resources to enhance their skills that can be utilized in the performance of their duties. Additionally, all staff receive a mandatory annual two (2) hour Suicide Prevention refresher course.

Incarcerated individuals in general population who are active on the OMH caseload are seen routinely by a clinician, or as needed. DOCCS continuously facilitates callouts as requested by OMH staff. Given the mental health level of Shawangunk Correctional Facility, it does not offer any specialized mental health programs. Incarcerated individuals who are deemed in need of a higher level of care, or who would benefit from additional mental health programming, are transferred to other facilities that can meet their needs. Any incarcerated individual in need of support can request to see OMH or ask any staff to make a referral at any time. Security and civilian staff make immediate referrals if they have any concerns related to mental health or suicide risks according to Directive #4101, "Incarcerated Individual Suicide prevention." Furthermore, Shawangunk Correctional Facility is assigned two full-time chaplains who do weekly rounds to check on the incarcerated population and are available upon request to assist with grieving a loss.

GRIEVANCES

Issue(s) Identified: Incarcerated individuals expressed mistrust in the grievance program.

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 (CORC). 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.

A routine site visit of the IGP at Shawangunk Correctional Facility was conducted by the IGP Director and IGP Regional Coordinator on September 6, 2024, with no major issues or areas of concern noted. While walking the facility with the IGP Supervisor, it was observed that incarcerated individuals freely interacted with staff, appeared to feel comfortable asking questions and/or for assistance, and all interactions were positive. In addition, the IGP Director spoke directly with the incarcerated IGRC Representatives and Clerks, who spoke positively of the grievance program and its operations at the facility, and who indicated that the most difficult tasks with working in the IGP office was trying to get individuals in the population to understand there are other mechanisms available to resolve issues besides the IGP (i.e. non-grievable matters) and that they should avail themselves to those mechanisms for the most expeditious means of resolution.

It is important to note that the grievance program is not intended to expedite medical care or the scheduling of medical appointments. Many incarcerated individuals have a false belief that if they file a grievance, this will expedite appointments with facility or outside medical staff and/or modify medically indicated treatment or lack of indicated treatment. Medical appointments are scheduled based on

priority and availability of the provider or specialist. The grievance program has no authority to dictate medical appointments or treatment.

Below is the grievance data for Shawangunk Correctional Facility:

- For calendar year 2024, Shawangunk CF filed a total of 453 grievances, of which 92 (20.3%) were informally resolved prior to an IGRC hearing being held.
- Of the 106 grievances heard by the IGRC, 22 (20.8%) were found favorable to the grievant.
- Of the 255 grievances answered by the Superintendent, 86 (33.7%) were found favorable to the grievant.
- The IGP Supervisor handled 10 non-calendared contacts.
- A total of 200 (44.2%) of the grievances filed were found favorable to the grievant. When you include the 10 non-calendared contacts, the favorable resolution rate increases to 45.4%.

There has been no indication that the grievance program at Shawangunk Correctional Facility is not operating in accordance with Directive #4040. Further, it should be noted that of the sites visits conducted by the IGP Director at 19 correctional facilities in 2024, Shawangunk Correctional Facility was noted to be clean and with very welcoming staff.

Conclusion

DOCCS appreciates all of CANY's feedback related to Shawangunk 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 prepare for release.

Appendix F: OMH Response

NEW YORK STATE | Office of Mental Health
Central New York Psychiatric Center

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor
ANN MARIE T. SULLIVAN, M.D.
Commissioner

May 8, 2025

Jennifer Scaife
Executive Director
Correctional Association of New York
Post Office Box 793
Brooklyn, New York 11207

RE: Monitoring Visit to Shawangunk Correctional Facility – May 21 – 22, 2024

Dear Executive Director Scaife:

Thank you for sharing your post-visit briefing and recommendations regarding CANY's May 2024 visit to Shawangunk Correctional Facility (CF). We recognize that most of your report and findings are directed towards the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS); however, we would like to respond to the finding pertaining to the Office of Mental Health (OMH).

Finding:
"A significant number of respondents at Shawangunk expressed concerns about difficulties in accessing mental health care and the quality of care provided…Only 15% of respondents (5/34) stated that they could access the needed mental health programs. One person said that he was struggling with being incarcerated but was finding it difficult to access mental health services without accepting medication…Another person who was not on the OMH caseload said, 'Recently, we had a couple of deaths here. You would think they'd send a provider to check the temperature of [the] facility...don't get a chance to properly grieve.'…

Some concerns were raised about the nature of mental health care offered and the quality of staff. One respondent asserted the belief that mental health care is provided in the form of medication rather than therapy and that this is part of an approach that was intended to make the population submissive…Another expressed a lack of trust and said that 'you can't talk freely with mental health providers. You don't know what's going to happen with the information.'"

OMH Response:
It is difficult for OMH to respond to the findings that incarcerated individuals expressed concerns with accessing mental health services, as there is no information provided as to what methods these individuals used to try and access mental health. Mental health staff are available to incarcerated individuals either during scheduled callouts or via referral. If referrals were received on any of these individuals, mental health staff would have responded to them in accordance with policy, which dictates urgent referrals must be responded to immediately and regular referrals must be responded to within 14 days of receipt.

OMH staff are committed to maintaining the confidentiality of incarcerated individuals, and the information discussed in private callouts with mental health staff is kept confidential unless staff are made aware of safety issues that need to be addressed.

As indicated in previous responses, incarcerated individuals, regardless of whether they are active on the mental health caseload, are aware, and should be reminded, of how to contact OMH should they need mental health support. They are able to do this either via self-referral or by asking a staff member to submit a referral on their behalf. Furthermore, DOCCS and OMH have worked together to create messaging over the years, posted in various areas of all facilities, reminding incarcerated individuals of warning signs to be aware of and who to contact if they need support.

It is inaccurate that mental health services are not provided unless an individual is willing to take psychiatric medication or that it is mental health staff's intention to "make the population submissive." Mental health staff are trained to provide therapy to patients with or without psychiatric medication being prescribed, and they do so on a regular basis. There may be situations where, based on presentation and symptomology, psychiatric medication is clinically indicated, but the incarcerated individual lacks insight into their mental health condition and does not agree. Again, it is difficult for OMH to follow-up on these concerns without knowing relevant specific details.

Sincerely,

Li-Wen Lee, M.D.
Associate Commissioner
Division of Forensic Services

cc: Danielle Dill, Psy.D., Executive Director, CNYPC
William Vertoske, Deputy Director, Corrections Based Operations, CNYPC
File

Monitoring Visit To

Shawangunk Correctional Facility

Correctional Association of New York

Brooklyn, NY 11207
Post Office Box 793
212-254-5700 (We accept collect calls)
Brooklyn, NY 11207

CANY INDEPENDENT PRISON OVERSIGHT SINCE 1844

info@correctionalassociation.org
212-254-5700 (We accept collect calls)
www.correctionalassociation.org
info@correctionalassociation.org