MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT

OF CORRECTION

NORTH CENTRAL CORRECTIONAL INSITUTION

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STAFFING ANALYSIS REPORT

NOVEMBER 2021

North Central Correctional Institution Gardner, Massachusetts

Massachusetts Department of Correction

**Introduction**

In April 2021, the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC), specifically, The North Central Correctional Institution (NCCI Gardner), participated in a Virtual Instructor Lead Training initiative sponsored by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC). The primary function of the training was to analyze institutional data to develop a comprehensive security staffing analysis. This staffing analysis was conducted as the result of the Massachusetts Department of Correction’s (Department) participation in a National Institute of Correction (NIC) pilot program. The pilot began on April 1, 2021 and consisted of a total of eight (8), two (2) hour long sessions. In addition, between classes, the teams had intersession assignments regarding the staffing analysis process. The Department’s team consists of team leader Matthew Divris (Superintendent, NCCI Gardner), Patricia Malanson (Deputy Superintendent of Operations, NCCI Gardner), Lisa Curto (Deputy Superintendent of Reentry, NCCI Gardner), Gerry Chapman (Director of Facility Maintenance, NCCI Gardner), and Timothy Gotovich (Director, Policy Development and Compliance Unit, Central Office). The facility staff members assigned to the team provided the facility profile, activity schedule, and post evaluation sections of the report. The central office representative contributed the introduction, relief factor, and staff coverage plan sections of the report. The finding and recommendations section was the collaborative effort of all team members.

The purpose of this staffing analysis was to evaluate the number of security staff members and first line supervisors needed to staff all the facility’s identified posts. Therefore, the analysis includes correction officer I, correction officer II (sergeant), correction officer III (lieutenant), and captain positions. This staffing analysis did not consider ancillary and support positions that also have care and custody elements (e.g., facility maintenance staff, recreational officer positions, correctional program officers).

**Facility Mission, Operational Philosophy**

NCCI Gardner is a state run, medium security, facility that houses sentenced male inmates. The average length of stay for sentenced inmates at NCCI Gardner in CY 2020 was 1,552 days. The average age of sentenced inmates was 48, 18 being the youngest and 83 the oldest. 81% of the sentenced inmates are serving more than 10 years, with 18% of sentenced inmates serving 1st or 2nd degree life. The governing offense types at NCCI Gardner are; 40% Person, 52% Sex, 2% Property, and 6% Drug/Other. All newly sentenced MA DOC inmates will be placed at MCI Cedar Junction (reception), complete the classification process, and then be transferred appropriately to another facility.

NCCI Gardner has an industries program consisting of two (2) optical shops which is overseen by MassCor industries. This program allows approximately 70-75 inmates to participate. Additionally, NCCI Gardner supports Culinary Arts, Welding, Small Engine Repair, and NEADS service dog training. All facilities within the Massachusetts Department of Correction are guided by ACA standards.

**Physical Design Characteristics, Facility Configuration.**

The operational capacity for NCCI Gardner as of January 1, 2021, is 1,024. The current facility count fluctuates between 700-720 inmates. The physical layout at NCCI Gardner is considered a “campus” style. Housing units, recreational areas, program space, and staff areas are spread throughout the property. Approximately half of the population resides in dormitory housing, with the other half in two person rooms. NCCI Gardner is a medium security facility. There are three active towers including the Vehicle Trap tower. The Vehicle Trap is an external gate, while the East/West gate can internally separate the facility grounds. NCCI Gardner has an Inner and Outer Control rooms. Movement checkpoints are assigned throughout the facility and are subject to change daily.

**Administrative and External Factors**

* **Hiring / Recruiting / Retention**: Hiring and recruitment of all correction officers is done by DOC central office. Support staff postings are done by personnel and forwarded to NCCI administration for vetting and interviewing. Correction officers will be assigned to facilities by personnel based upon staff shortages.
* **Absenteeism**: Absenteeism is tracked by the Superintendent’s office and central payroll. The Superintendent, in accordance with the collective bargaining agreements, will issue notifications to security staff that reach a certain threshold with sick time. Excessive absenteeism is subject to the staff disciplinary process.
* **Overtime**: Overtime at NCCI is tracked daily by operations in a state-wide database. Staff vacancies and an abundance of outside trips have impacted overtime.
* **Collective Bargaining Agreements**: NCCI Gardner operates in accordance with four (4) collective bargaining units: Massachusetts Correction Officer Federated Union (MCOFU) for correction officers, New England Police Benevolent Association (NEPBA) for captains, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) for correctional program officers, and National Association of Government Employees (NAGE) for support staff.
* **New Laws / Regulations**: The implementation of the Criminal Justice Reform Act of 2018 has significantly impacted roles and the way restrictive housing is handled. The Serious Mental Illness (SMI) criteria were changed, increasing the Serious Mental Illness (SMI) count from 81 to 198 at NCCI. Federal stimulus checks have increased clothing/electronic ordering which impacts property inventory and tracking.

**Staffing Analysis Concepts and Methodology**

The concept of a staffing analysis is to provide an accurate representation of the total number of staff members necessary to efficiently run an operation. In this instance, the operation is a medium-security, state correctional facility. The factors that must be entertained when assessing the staffing requirements in a medium-security correctional setting include:

* Inmates within the correctional facility must be continuously under staff supervision.
* To facilitate direct supervision of the inmate population, specific posts within the facility must be staffed on a continuous basis, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year (inmate housing, sensitive security posts such as control centers, etc.). Therefore, these posts must include a calculated relief factor to ensure that these posts are always staffed.
* A set, minimum number of security staff must be maintained 24 hours a day to facilitate emergency response procedures (e.g., posts identified to have an emergency response responsibility in addition to the day to day operations of the post).
* Correctional facilities offer a wide range of programs and services in order to care for the inmate population and to facilitate reentry. Programs are offered in accordance with facility demographics and include education, vocational programs, industry programs, violence reduction, substance use programs, sex offender treatment programs, etc. In addition, many correctional facilities (to include NCCI Gardner), offer 24 / 7 medical coverage.
* In addition to the programs and services offered, a medium-security, state correctional facility houses longer term (as opposed to county houses of correction and jails) inmates. These inmates have a wide range of possible crimes for which they are incarcerated (to include violent offenses, property offenses, sex crimes, etc.). Medium-security, state correctional facilities can be high risk environments and require adequate staffing to be able to respond to a wide variety of potential disturbances (inmate insurrections, violence, fires, medical emergencies, etc.).
* Due to the inherent risks of working within a correctional facility, staff turnover and time off are often high. Staff time off can also be highly variable and must be assessed on a facility by facility basis. Factors that influence time off include staff seniority (veteran staff accrue more vacation time), number of staff members who also serve in the military, number of staff assigned to specialty units (tactical response units).
* The age and design of the facility. Older facilities can have design limitations that are staff intensive to include limited sight lines, centralized operations such as medical services and food services that require inmate movement (in need of supervision), large and diffuse campus style arrangements that require multiple staffed posts / checkpoints, gates, etc.

**Relief Factor**

A relief factor is the ratio between the total number of hours of coverage needed for a post and the average number of hours employees are available to work. A relief factor is integral in determining total staffing needs when dealing with an operation that has posts in need of constant and continuing staff coverage (inmate housing areas, sensitive security operational areas, etc.).

To determine the relief factor at NCCI Gardner, staff time usage statistics were collected from 2018, 2019, and 2020. The time usage for these three (3) years was then averaged to ensure the most accurate number possible. Each category of staff was calculated separately to determine the relief factor for line staff (COI), front line supervisors (COII), and supervisory staff members (COIII). The total number of hours that staff would be available over the course of a year was determined to be 2086 (40 hours per work week multiplied by 52.14 weeks in a year). To calculate the total number of hours per year that the average staff member was available to work, the team first had to calculate the average number of hours per year that a staff member was unavailable to work. To calculate this number, data reflecting the following time use categories was collected:

* **Annual leave** (to include vacation leave and compensatory time); **Holidays**; **Leave without pay**; **Military leave**; **Personal leave**; **Sick leave** (to include FMLA time); **Training**; **Workers compensation**; **Other** (bereavement leave, jury duty); **Vacancy**.

**Security Post Analysis**

The NCCI team identified common posts (housing units), and non-common posts and evaluated post orders associated with each to determine if the coverage provided currently was adequate, excessive, or in need of bolstering. Certain posts have been identified as “pull posts”; an officer that can be removed from that post due to institutional need. While conducting post analysis, variables to consider were emergency response, quality of video surveillance, if any, and how it would disrupt the normal running of the institution.

**Findings and Recommendations**

As stated in the previous section, the usage of staff time has the greatest impact on the total FTE amount needed to run the operation safely and humanely. The greatest single impact on the average amount of staff time used was the vacancy rate. From the vacancy number of hours lost over the course of a year, further trickle-down affects can be seen in the usage of other staff time due to the extra usage of overtime (voluntary and forced) to ensure that continuous coverage posts are filled.

Efforts should be made to staff the facility at the authorized level of FTEs (or as close to the authorized level as possible) by staff category. By doing so, the vacancy rate hours will be reduced, leading to a consequential reduction in overtime necessary (voluntary and forced). Further consequences downstream could see the sick time usage decrease as a properly staffed facility could lead to increased morale and less overtime.