



Union County Facility Civilian Employee Staffing Analysis

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A. Background

The Union County Department of Corrections, located in Elizabeth, New Jersey requested the Nakamoto Group, Inc. conduct a staffing analysis to evaluate the staffing level and duties performed by civilian staff assigned to the facility and to provide recommendations for staffing level adjustment, consolidation of job duties and the reassignment of supervision when indicated. The analysis consisted of reviewing pre-site visit documents, and a site visit conducted on Monday, August 17, 2020 and Tuesday, August 18, 2020, which included staff interviews and a tour of staff office areas. Additional staff interviews were conducted on Tuesday, August 25, 2020 and Wednesday, August 26, 2020.

In 2017, the state of New Jersey implemented a new bail system that allowed more people to remain free while awaiting trial. As a result, the inmate population of the Union County Department of Corrections decreased by nearly two thirds. Before the bail reform implementation, the Union County Department of Corrections' average inmate population was approximately 700. Currently, the average population is approximately 250.

In March 2020, the coronavirus pandemic caused the Union County Department of Corrections officials to restrict access to all non-essential civilian employees. Two employees continued to work part-time, reporting to their physical work location two days a week (inmate accounts and purchasing). Eight employees were temporarily reassigned to work with other agencies within the county and remained reassigned at the time of the visit. All other civilian employees returned to work in late June. During the civilian employees' absence, necessary job duties were completed by sworn staff.

B. Organizational Structure and Staffing

Facility staffing is comprised of sworn and civilian staff. Civilian staff primarily perform administrative functions. Areas reviewed during the staffing analysis were fiscal services, which include bail clerks, contract compliance, budgets, purchasing and inmate accounts; human resources; classification; mailroom; social services; storeroom; overtime callers; and administrative professionals assigned to the director's office.



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Security
Exemption

Staff offices are in various areas of the facility with the [REDACTED]. The director's office is located [REDACTED]. Other departments on [REDACTED] include purchasing, budgets, and classification. [REDACTED] offices include overtime callers, inmate accounts, human resources, stockroom, mailroom, and bail bonds. Social services offices are located [REDACTED] and the contract compliance office is [REDACTED].

The staff is comprised of 213 sworn staff and 28 civilian staff. Captains serve as supervisors to both sworn and civilian staff in their assigned areas. Currently, most civilian staff report to a captain.

C. Observations and Recommendations

All civilian operations were reviewed, and employees or supervisors were interviewed. All personnel were cooperative and readily shared information. In the estimation of the consultant, staffing adjustments, and supervision assignment changes can be made to address staffing concerns and provide a more efficient workflow. Our recommendations are below:

Bail Clerks - The need to receive bail money has drastically reduced due to bail reform and is virtually non-existent at this time. There are two employees assigned to receive bail; one works evening hours Monday through Friday and the other works part-time and provides support to human resources. During their COVID related absence, officers served as bail clerks when necessary. Bail processing duties do not support the employment of two clerks and can be completed by officers. Given the training and background of the two bail clerks, the assignment of duties in support of human resources and clerical functions would be appropriate. Formalized assignment and distribution of duties is necessary.

Classification - The population of the Union County Department of Corrections has been reduced by almost two-thirds since the implementation of bail reform. There are currently five employees assigned to work within the classification unit. Although the type of work has not changed, the volume has certainly been impacted. The current inmate population supports the assignment of two full-time employees within the classification unit; a reduction of two thirds. Filing assistance, if necessary, should be provided by general clerical staff.

Contract Compliance - It appears the bulk of contract compliance duties for food service and medical consist of preparation for the RCCP (request for competitive contract proposal) process which occurs once every two years. The contract compliance monitor reported she prepares weekly food service reports which are submitted to the finance manager and rarely physically monitors the food service area operations (possibly once per month). The contract compliance monitor duties should be reassigned to the finance department. The finance department provides the necessary information to the contract compliance monitor for the RCCP process.



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Weekly food service and medical reports should be sent to finance for review and reconciliation. Given the current practice of visiting food service once per month and only monitoring medical using reports, reassignment of duties would not be overly time-consuming or burdensome.

Director's office support staff - There is currently two clerical staff assigned to the director's office; one serves as the administrative secretary to the director and the other provides clerical support to the assistant director. Both are currently reassigned to other agencies within the county. Clerical assignments made by the director and assistant director are currently completed by general clerical staff. Upon the conclusion of the temporary assignment, the administrative duties of the director and assistant director should be assigned to the administrative secretary with back-up assistance provided by general clerical staff. An executive assistant placement would provide the executive level assistance and expertise required by a director.

Finance - The finance manager supervises several different areas, including inmate accounts, purchasing, contract compliance, and bail bonds, and is responsible for budgetary aspects of the agency. As recommended earlier, the finance department should formally assume contract compliance duties as a vast majority of the contract compliance duties already fall within the realm of the finance department and can be absorbed. Based on current structure and workload, there is no obvious deterrent to the absorption of these duties. Human resources and finance should work closely together due to the financial impact of personnel and payroll on the budget.

Human Resources (HR) - There is a manager assigned to human resources who is responsible for hiring and benefits for all employees. A part-time bail clerk is assigned to assist with human resources duties; however, there is not a clear assignment of duties. Employee payroll processing is an HR responsibility; however, the scheduling department maintains employee schedules, records employee call outs, enters leave and overtime requests, calls overtime, and finalizes employee timecards before pay processing. The disconnect between the scheduling department and human resources could be addressed through the implementation of a clear workflow process. A close working relationship between finance and human resources should be established to minimize the impact of, and plan for, budget expenditures. Bail clerks should be assigned additional formalized duties within human resources.

To facilitate a cohesive approach to the development and implementation of workflow and information sharing processes, human resources, finance, scheduling, and training departments should report to one supervisor. The areas should work together to each other to facilitate better communication and access to each other, to minimize any potential disruption due to the change.

Inmate Accounts and Mail processing - Inmate accounts and mail processing staff is in the [redacted]. The employee processing inmate accounts and correction officers serve as a back-up for inmate mail processing. Due to the [redacted] and the time obligations associated with inmate accounts and mail processing,



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one employee should be assigned to complete both duties. Correction officers and fiscal staff are trained to cover duties during absences.

Overtime caller -Three civilian overtime callers work in the scheduling department to schedule needed overtime for upcoming shifts. During the absence of an overtime caller, the staff is provided overtime opportunities to cover the duties. This practice is governed by a collective bargaining agreement. The ideal situation is to eliminate the need to pay overtime to cover the position during absences. If permitted under the union contract, recommendations include filling the absence with an available corrections officer; allow the shift to go unfilled during short absences; permanently assign overtime caller duties to correction officers or sergeants which will provide built-in coverage and eliminate the need to call overtime; or modify the hours worked by civilian overtime callers during long-term absences (i.e., 12-hour shifts). Overtime callers work Monday through Friday so it would seem reasonable that a shift or two could remain unfilled for a short period.

Social Services – The social services area is comprised of a supervisor and five social workers. Currently, social workers are assigned work in other county agencies, and duties are covered by the social work supervisor. The population of the Union County Department of Corrections has been reduced by almost two-thirds since the implementation of bail reform. Staff assignments for those areas serving the inmate population should mirror the reduction in population; therefore, two social workers and one supervisor would be adequate to manage the workload. We recommend they be assigned to social services as such.

Juvenile Detention -The juvenile detention unit is under the supervision of the Union County Department of Corrections and employs five employees; one chief, one juvenile detention officer supervisor, and three detention officers. There is currently nine youth being held in Essex county and three on electronic monitoring. It would be reasonable to expect the caseload could be handled by one or two employees.

D. Conclusion

The facility experienced a significant decrease in its inmate population after the implementation of bail reform measures. The recommendations in this report will allow the facility to adjust its civilian staffing level in response to the reduction in population and provide opportunities to address staffing structure.