



MULTNOMAH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff Nicole Morrisey O'Donnell

December 26, 2024

The Multnomah County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) has received the reports completed by volunteers who participated in the Correctional Facilities Community Inspection program in 2024, in accordance with the County Charter, following the approval of Measure 26-233 in November 2022. I want to personally thank these members of the public and Multnomah County staff for the hard work that went into facilitating the second year of an additional inspection of our Multnomah County correctional facilities.

The County Charter states the County will use an application process to identify at least one volunteer member of the public to accompany the Multnomah County Board of County Commissioners every calendar year for an inspection of county jails administered by the Sheriff to ensure transparency and oversight. This is in addition to an inspection completed by the Board each year as required by State law.

As an agency, we value the perspectives of the members of the community that participate in this process. Their voices add value to the understanding of the correctional environment. Overall, I agree with the input from the volunteers regarding the seriousness of addressing our staffing shortages in the jails, the importance of our partnerships with County Facilities and Corrections Health, and the equity and inclusion work for our Office.

I appreciate the attention to the seriousness of addressing staffing issues. Last month, Multnomah County Chair Jessica Vega Pederson approved our request for a \$965,885 budget modification to expand our Human Resources Unit and cover multiple unfunded positions. The additional funding, along with a closer partnership with Central Human Resources and implementation of improvements in our HR processes will facilitate meaningful changes that will not only benefit the Corrections Division, but the entire agency.

I also appreciate the volunteers emphasizing the importance of a strong relationship between the Sheriff's Office and clinical care provider, the County's Corrections Health Division. Through the continued prioritization of our interagency work, we are streamlining shared communication, tackling operational challenges, and supporting the development and expansion of mental health and substance use disorder services. We are committed to this partnership and hope to engage in similar efforts with homeless services providers to increase the support we can provide to the adults leaving our custody who are unstably housed.

As Sheriff, the work of equity and inclusion is a priority for me. I remain committed to continuing the partnership with the County on the Workforce Equity Strategic Plan (WESP)

initiatives and investing in our DEI practitioners in order to infuse equity and empowerment throughout our philosophy and policies.

Finally, I agree that the time is now, to begin planning for a study related to the correctional facilities in Multnomah County. We must ensure that our facilities are physically sound and safe in order to not only meet constitutional mandates but also have the infrastructure to offer rehabilitative programs and reentry connections. To that end, the continued use of an aging high-rise and splitting the incarcerated population between two different buildings is likely not the most fiscally responsible.

Through the 2024 Corrections Recommendations Project, we have implemented a meaningful response to required evaluations. I look forward to utilizing a similar framework in the coming year to ensure the security and wellbeing of adults in our custody and staff working in our facilities, while centering our values of transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

Sincerely,

Nicole Morrissey O'Donnell

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Multnomah County Sheriff