

STATEWIDE FACILITY CLOSURE GUIDELINES

PA Department of Corrections



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1. ABSTRACT

Before the year 2012, the State of Pennsylvania's correction population indicated a steady increase, which in turn required an increase in the number of facilities to accommodate the growth. However, in July of 2012, Pennsylvania's number of incarcerated individuals significantly dropped, statistically the greatest decrease over the previous 40 years. This change prompted the Department of Corrections (DOC) to restructure its facilities, which included the necessary closing of two prisons, SCI Greensburg and SCI Cresson. Following a close examination and evaluation of these closings and all processes involved, the DOC has determined that more operationally effective, fiscally sound, cost-effective methodologies, including maximum consideration of staff, community, legislative, and legal impacts, shall be required for all facility expansions and closings moving forward. The guidelines delineated herein represent and encourage the most comprehensive, consistent, empathetic, and organized approach to the closing of Pennsylvania's correctional facilities.

2. OBJECTIVE

In order to effectively plan and implement the expansion/closure of DOC facilities, an Initial Committee that comprises responsible parties initially needs to be established. This committee leads the decision-making process, determining all mission goals and rationale for closure, as well as methodologies for ensuring the fulfillment of facility closure objectives.

2.1. Establish Responsible Parties

The DOC will create a Committee to conduct a thorough and comprehensive review of the options for facility expansion/closure. This Committee should comprise members from the following departments, at a minimum, as well as Executive Staff members responsible for making final decisions.

2.1.1 Initial Committee

- Legal
- Policy, Grants, and Legislative Affairs
- Office of Population Management
- Security
- Bureau of Human Resources
- Press Office
- Administration
- Operations

2.1.2 Review and Signoff

The Committee will determine the most reasonable options for facility expansion/closure and will provide a detailed justification for the outcome. The Secretary will review the results and make a final decision of the direction in which to proceed after consulting with the Governor's Office. This decision shall be in accordance with the overall mission of the DOC.

2.1.3 Define Mission Goals and Objectives

To facilitate a focused and goal-oriented approach, the Initial Committee, in conjunction with the Executive Staff, will identify and document Mission Goals and Objectives. This will become the compass for all future decisions and processes completed over the course of the project, and all efforts and planning will continue to align with the established Mission Goals and Objectives. These goals and objectives will be communicated to the public via a general announcement, well in advance of the final decision and implementation plan, in order to raise awareness among concerned parties.

2.2. Determine and Assess Approach: Decision Making

In order to gather and provide the necessary information to make an informed decision, the following processes will be implemented, documented, and provided to decision makers. A sample spreadsheet of such decision-making criteria is included in **Attachment A**.

2.2.1. Cost-Benefit Analysis/Cost Savings

A high-level review of all physical plant concerns associated with the expansion/closure of the facility must also be addressed and analyzed. This includes any outstanding financial responsibilities for recently completed projects, projects that are pending completion, and projects that may result as part of the expansion/closure process. (See **Attachment A**)

2.2.2. Capital and GESA Projects

A review of any current, projected, and past Capital Projects and GESA Projects will also determine any associated financial responsibilities and debts. These will need to be outlined and reviewed as part of the decision-making process. (See **Attachment A**)

2.2.3. Variables

Programming, facility structure, and other necessary provisions for the facility will need to be

considered. These considerations should also include housing units, available programs, facility security level, and flexibility of use.

2.2.4. Data

The Initial Committee and Executive staff will review all collected and analyzed data. This information will be used to determine possible options for facility opening/closure and will provide the necessary details for making an informed and justified decision. Reviewed data should include population reports, specialized population reports, cost reports, complement reports, and other pertinent information.

2.2.5. Impact Analyses

Upon determining viable options for closure, the Initial Committee, in conjunction with other appropriate staff, will be responsible for conducting proactive analyses of the following areas before expansion/closure begins:

- **Community/Economic Impact:** Consult with the Department of Labor and Industry, as well as the Department of Community and Economic Development to assess any county and economic impacts.
- **Political Impacts:** Communicate with internal Office of Policy, Grants, and Legislative Affairs to identify and proactively address any known political implications associated with the decision to expand/close a facility.
- **Legislative Impacts:** Examine any legislation that may affect facility population
- **Financial Impact:** Complete a thorough review of fiscal ramifications and responsibilities to be maintained throughout the expansion/closure of a facility.
- Security Impact
- Impact on DOC and Contract Staff
- Impact on Inmates
- Impact on Parole Processing
- Impact on Human Resources
- Office of Population Management
- Impact on Contractors and Contractual Obligations

The outcome of these analyses will be documented and provided to the Secretary for review as part of the decision-making process.

2.2.6. Utility

A thorough review of all functions and viable options for redistribution of staff, offenders,

programming needs, etc. will be completed for each of the recommended options, including a determination of:

- Specialized housing units available at other facilities.
- Location of utility facilities in relation to the closing facility.

2.2.7. Determining Options for Staff

The Human Resources Department will perform a thorough review of how the proposed changes will impact staff. The following factors must also be considered:

- Possible reassignment options (Note map included in Section 3.3.3)
- Retirement eligibility
- Non-DOC employment comparisons in the locale
- Implications for civil service and non-civil service (See **Attachment C**)
- Review of contractual issues/Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) language (including seniority and furlough process)
- Proximity to proposed transfer locations
- Facilitation of staff transportation options (e.g., ride share, carpool) to relocated area

2.2.8. Property Options

For each of the proposed options, possible resale or repurposing possibilities will be identified.

2.2.9. Recruitment/Retention Issues

Staffing concerns will also need to be evaluated. This evaluation includes the identification of specialized positions, transfer or recruitment options, and other staffing factors.

2.2.10. Determining Options for Offenders

A delineation of all impacted offenders will be reviewed, and preparations will be made for appropriate transfer based upon the following factors:

- Time to release/Parole review eligibility
- Required programs
- Proximity to home
- Medical/Health needs
- Security concerns
- Separations

- Incentive-based transfers
- Custody levels
- Specialized housing

2.3. Executive Approval: Viable Options

Once data are collected and analyses are completed, a synopsis of all factors reviewed and considered shall be provided to Executive Staff for further review. A proposal including recommended options will be documented and shared with the decision makers (See **Attachment B** for example). Executive Staff will then review the proposed options submitted by the Initial Committee and will make a final determination of approach, after which planning and implementation will begin.

2.3.1. Summary of Decision and Related Documentation

All factors and steps taken during this process shall be documented and available for review by involved parties. This information should also be formatted in such a way that it may be shared with the Governor's Office, Legislators, other agencies and public, as required, without compromising the safety or security of the facilities, staff, or offenders involved.

2.4. Governor's Office

The Secretary shall meet with the Governor's Office to discuss the proposal and confer on the targeted strategy. All attempts will be made to come to a consensus regarding the best approach for implementation.

2.5. Outside Agencies

Upon approval by the Governor's Office, notification will be sent to all identified agencies that may be impacted by the agreed-upon plan. An inter-agency committee will be established to coordinate between the various agencies to allow effective utilization of services. Agencies to be considered are:

- Department of Public Welfare
- Department of General Services
- Department of Labor and Industry
- Department of Community and Economic Development
- Office of Administration
- Other identified agencies

Effective communication with these agencies is imperative to successful coordination of services. Involved agencies must be apprised of the situation and circumstances surrounding the decision.

3. COMMUNICATION AND NOTIFICATION PROCESS

The timeline for the communication and notification process shall be determined based upon various factors such as urgency, sensitivity, or nature of the project, and will vary on a case-by-case basis. Parties must be notified (at the same time, if possible, or in the following suggested order) of the expansion/closure in a timely and appropriate manner:

- Governor's Office
- Legislators
- Superintendents/Facilities
- Administrative staff
- Staff
- Board of Probation and Parole
- Unions
- Offenders
- Other affected agencies (e.g., DCED, Labor and Industry-Rapid Response, DGS, Office of Administration)
- Stakeholders
- News media
- Public (Notice on the DOCNet Public Site for offenders' families/visitors, to include a referral to the Inmate Locator Page)
- SEAP

Any communication may be covered by the Right to Know Act and all correspondence/ communication should be written and disseminated with this in mind.

3.1. Legislators

As legislators are notified, the following activities will occur:

- Non-specific commentary on the possible need for closure/expansion based upon shifts in population and other factors will be issued well in advance of the final decision and implementation plan.
- Legislative districts will be identified and involved after decision is made. The Director of Policy, Grants, and Legislative Affairs/Legislative Liaison should be available for contact (in person, if possible) when the decision is communicated. Budget year, timing, and related fiscal matters will be considered.

- Legislators will be provided with an analysis of information from which the decision was made, as well as an explanation of any security issues.

3.2. Communication Methodologies

Information about the expansion/closure of a facility can occur via the following modes of communication, depending upon the most effective and considerate action:

- Include in written notification as much information as is available to proactively address staff and offender concerns (See **Attachments H, I, and J** for sample letters).
- Communicate via electronic format (e.g., email, website).
- Schedule press release and conference.
- Establish centralized telephone line for family members to contact the Department of Corrections.
- Provide an FAQ link on the website.
- Ensure a single line of communication by temporarily suspending local Public Information Officers (PIO) and using only communication released by Central Office.
- Develop relationships with affected departments in advance.

3.3. Additional Notification Considerations

Other important communication and notification issues to consider throughout the expansion/closure process are listed below:

- Develop a timeline for notifications to ensure that responsible parties know in advance which individuals to alert and at what point on the timeline the alert should fall.
- Maintain consistent and constant communication, and promptly deliver employee concerns to appropriate parties.
- Coordinate the announcement such that awareness by all parties is simultaneous.
- Provide onsite Regional Deputies and Human Resources staff.
- Prevent rumors in the press by being proactive and presenting the action positively to the media.
- Develop relationships with affected departments in advance.

4. PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION: TRANSITION

4.1. Identify Responsible Parties and Establish Transition Team

The Initial Committee and Executive staff will identify a Transition Team to facilitate all planning and

implementation of the project as outlined in the following sections. This team will include identified staff from all major impact areas, such as those below (and as applicable), including a Team Leader:

- Public Relations
- Bureau of Human Resources
- Bureau Directors
- Administration
- Budget
- Legal
- Treatment Services
- Information Technology
- Institutional staff (to include Superintendents and other points of contact)
- Office of Population Management
- Security
- Operations
- Other agency staff

All members of the Transition Team will be responsible for coordinating efforts in their areas but will maintain coordination of areas through the Team Leader.

4.2. Establish Timeline

The Transition Team, in conjunction with the Initial Committee and Executive Staff, will determine the expansion/closure timeline based upon specific details of the project. In some cases, a longer timeline can be established and utilized. Other cases, however, may require a more expedited process. The timeline shall be created and utilized in accordance with the overall objective and goal for the project.

4.3. Role of Human Resources

Human Resources will function as an integral part of any decision-making processes and implementation in accordance with Management Directives and other directives as listed below. All consideration for the welfare of staff shall be emphasized, and every effort must be made to provide assistance to, and ensure the security of, all those impacted by the decision.

- 505.1 - Employee Furlough Policy
- 505.7 - Personnel Rules
- 530.18 - Benefit Rights of Furloughed Employees
- 570.8 - Reinstatement of Dismissed or Furloughed Employees into the State Employees' Retirement System

- 570.9 - Reinstatement into the State Employees' Retirement System of Employees Furloughed or Otherwise Terminated and Reemployed
- 570.12 - Refusal of Recall From Furlough - Termination of Interest on Retirement Contributions
- Civil Service Rules - Chapter 101
- Civil Service Act - Article VIII, Section 802
- Collective Bargaining Unit Agreements/Union Contracts

4.3.1. Meetings and Personnel

As part of the planning and implementation phase, regular meetings will be held to discuss and review identified needs and should involve the following activities:

- Discuss and address correspondence issues with Unions.
- Hold Rapid Response meetings with key individuals once the decision to close has been made.
- Schedule weekly meetings.
- Maintain SERS availability and a dedicated Human Resources team on site.
- Maintain communication with the Office of Administration on any issues pertaining to the possible downsizing or furlough of employees.
- Work collaboratively with the Labor and Industry Rapid Response Team to ensure effective communication and targeted approach for assistance.

4.3.2. Employment/Staffing

The Human Resources Department shall assume the lead on all employment and staffing activities to include the following:

- Identify all impacted staff and possible associated Labor Unions in order to ensure a proactive approach to communication and collaboration (See **Attachment C**).
- Work with the Legal Department and Office of Administration Bureau of Labor Relations on all potential labor relations issues to ensure that proper protocol is followed.
- Review most recent staffing survey and identify possible adjustments in complement.
- Establish a hiring freeze at least a month in advance to prepare for closing, if necessary, or determine facilities to which staff will likely transfer and institute a hiring freeze for those identified facilities.
- Discontinue staff transfers to facilities that are closing, review transfer policies, and coordinate staff transfers to new facilities.
- Examine potential for furloughed individuals to accept other DOC or state positions.

4.3.3. Use Map of Facility

A guide map will be created and implemented to determine possible redeployment options for staff (See **Attachment D**).

4.4. Facility Closure Operations and Contracts

As planning and implementation proceeds, all pertinent operational, equipment, or contractual needs will be identified and reviewed. All necessary actions that must transpire in relation to these needs will be determined. In order to facilitate these related actions, a sample letter has been included for reference in communicating expectations for each Department head (See **Attachment E**).

4.4.1. Physical Plant Operations

A review of all physical plant operations will be conducted to determine what actions need to be taken. At a minimum, this review should involve:

- Establishing a single point of contact.
- Coordinating the transfer of maintenance staff between opening and/or closing facilities, in conjunction with the Bureau of Human Resources.
- Determining the appropriate use or removal of any modular units and associated costs.
- Ensuring that all utilities are handled appropriately, including activating, modifying, or terminating services.
- Understanding maintenance and project costs, as well as Capital or GESA projects (and when to conclude).
- Verifying Legacy costs and their impact on utilities within the community.

An itemized listing of all physical plant items should be created and reviewed for completion during the course of the project to ensure that all necessary activities have been identified and completed. See **Attachment F** for a sample checklist to use during this process.

4.4.2. Management of Facility Property

All facility property should be itemized during the implementation phase of the project, and existing inventories (if available) can be used for reference. This property must be identified before its appropriate transfer, surplus, or destruction is determined or implemented. For a sample inventory checklist, refer to **DOC Policy 06.03.01 Section 7, Attachment D**. Property assessment should include a minimum of the following items:

- Vehicles
- Medical/Dental equipment
- Office supplies
- Furniture
- Maintenance equipment
- Recreational equipment
- Electronics (e.g., televisions, computers, copiers/fax machines, media devices, telephones)
- Security equipment (e.g., radios, keys, weapons, gear, uniforms)

Additionally, a plan will be established for all transfer, surplus, or destruction of property, and will be implemented and documented in accordance with **DOC Policies 10.02.01, 06.03.01**.

4.4.3. Offender Transitioning

The Office of Population Management (OPM) will be heavily involved with the planning and implementation of all offender movement. A plan will be designed to facilitate this movement in accordance with security and safety concerns. Staff will be identified to implement this plan, and should also be included in the planning phase to allow a more streamlined and informed front-end approach. At a minimum, the following factors must be addressed in transitioning and moving offenders:

- Property issues
- Available bed space
- Parole review eligibility
- Incentive-based transfers
- Specialized needs
- Security concerns/separations
- Transportation needs, such as vehicles, staff, uniforms, security equipment
- Manifests
- Visitation
- Mail/Correspondence; discuss with local post office

4.4.4. Staff Operations

The Bureau of Human Resources, in conjunction with institutional leaders, will develop a plan for redeployment/employment or furlough of staff, as needed. Institutional needs, staff sharing, and possible contractual provisions for the maintenance and security of the facility will be considered during the project implementation phase.

4.4.5. Contractual Obligations

All contractual obligations should be identified and reviewed for necessary action. This should comprise all existing or proposed contractual needs to include the following:

- Food Service
- Medical
- Mental Health
- Drug and alcohol staff/other treatment staff
- Maintenance

In order to facilitate these related actions, a sample Vendor Checklist has been included for reference in communicating expectations for each Department head (See **Attachment G**).

4.4.6. Risk Management

During the planning and implementation phase, risk management will be assessed and considered in the following areas:

- Legal concerns
- Security issues
- CERT familiarization
- RHU staff transition
- Policy considerations
- Depopulation Process
- Operation of facility until expansion/closure is complete

Efforts will be made to ensure that affected institutional staff will be involved in the assessment, planning, and implementation of these objectives, when possible.

4.4.7. Parole Staffing and Resources

Appropriate staffing and resources necessary to ensure effective parole processing and review will also be considered during this period. The project shall not negatively impact offenders' eligibility for parole at the earliest possible date. Therefore, Unit Management and Administrative staff, as well as Parole staff and resources will be made available to promote effective processing during this time.

4.4.8. Contacting Other DOC and Commonwealth Agencies with Previous Expansion or Closing

The Transition Team should reach out to staff with previous experience in the opening/closure of a facility and should utilize them as valuable resources. A listing of DOC staff contacts should be maintained and made available through the Bureau of Human Resources.

5. DECOMMISSIONING AND EVALUATION PROCESS

5.1. Debriefing and Evaluation of Results

As decommissioning occurs, a debriefing and an evaluation of results should be performed. Additionally, a debriefing regarding “lessons learned” (with any accompanying documentation) should be scheduled as soon as possible after project completion. This meeting should include not only Executive Staff, Initial Committee, and Transition Team, but also several affected staff members.

5.1.1. Summarization Report

After debriefing is complete, a summarization report of all information pertaining to project completion will be created and made available for review by the Governor’s Office and other interested parties upon request.

5.2. Post-Action Management of Facility

The following issues and items must be managed and accounted for during the decommissioning process:

- Surplus equipment/inventory
- IT Issues (e.g., FEMMs, Dual Facility, personnel files, NCIC)
- Records storage
- Mail forwarding and other mail processes/ contacting of local post office
- Grievances (both staff and offender)
- Misconducts
- Keys, weapons, vehicles, radios

A sample decommissioning checklist is provided (See **Attachment E**, Section 3) but should be updated to reflect the specific areas and needs of the facility.

5.2.1. Contracts

A review of necessary staffing, maintenance, security, and other issues should be reviewed to determine whether an extension of existing or possible supplemental contracts will be needed to assist in the decommissioning and mothballing process. All contracts shall be established in accordance with policy and procedures in conjunction with the Legal Department and Administration.

5.2.2. Mothballing

Any remaining issues should be addressed through the mothballing process. Items for consideration may include, at a minimum:

- Maintenance
- Security
- Review by local authorities (e.g., Fire Department, Ordinances, Zoning, etc.)

5.2.3 Disposition of Property

The Department will monitor progress of the closures, including continual collaboration with the interagency committee and communication with legislators and community leaders until the final disposition of the property. A final closing report will be prepared and submitted to the Governor's office and Legislature.

5.2. Records Retention

The storage, archival, and maintenance of all offender and staff records will be handled in accordance with DOC policies and other Commonwealth-wide directive.