



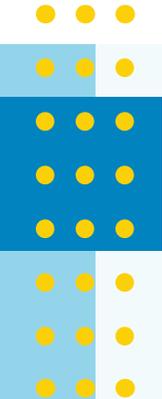
# Sedgwick County

Department of  
Corrections

Strategic Plan  
2023

# Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Background .....                         | 3  |
| Disclaimer.....                          | 3  |
| About the PPMC .....                     | 3  |
| Acknowledgments.....                     | 3  |
| Mission & Vision .....                   | 4  |
| Strategic Plan .....                     | 5  |
| Influencing Factors Report .....         | 10 |
| Appendix A: Stakeholder Engagement ..... | 14 |
| Appendix B: Community Event .....        | 18 |



## Prepared by the Public Policy & Management Center at Wichita State

The PPMC enhances public service to best serve your community. The PPMC believes that every community and organization is unique and, as such, is dedicated to understanding the needs and nuances of each. The PPMC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization driven by the mission of public service and is committed to a quality product that serves the needs of each organization and community.



**PUBLIC POLICY & MANAGEMENT CENTER**

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# Background

The Public Policy and Management Center (PPMC) contracted with the Sedgwick County Department of Corrections (SCDOC) in February of 2023, to lead a strategic planning process. This plan presents a roadmap guiding SCDOC policy priorities and resource allocation.

This strategic plan was formed by guidance and input from external stakeholders at Sedgwick County, Wichita State, the State of Kansas, and other nonprofits and local agencies. The staff at all SCDOC levels built the strategic planning strategies during two half-day retreats. A community event also provided input from public stakeholders and partner organizations on the drafted strategic plan.

# Disclaimer

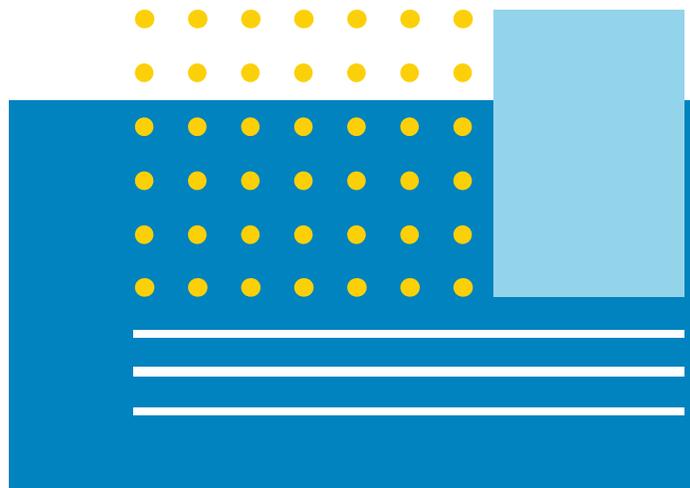
This study was conducted by the Public Policy and Management Center (PPMC) at Wichita State University (WSU). The PPMC is an independent research body unaffiliated with SCDOC. This report was prepared by the research team. It represents the findings, views, opinions, and conclusions of the research team alone. The report does not express the official or unofficial policy of WSU.

# About the PPMC

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# Acknowledgments

The PPMC would like to thank the Sedgwick County Department of Corrections Executive Team and staff for their commitment to this plan.





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## Mission

Because we believe people can change...

Sedgwick County Department of Corrections strives to create an environment for change that breaks the cycle of crime and reduces the risk of re-offending.

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• • • •

## Vision

Sedgwick County Department of Corrections will create a safer community through partnerships that empower justice-involved individuals to make positive changes in their lives.

# Strategic Plan

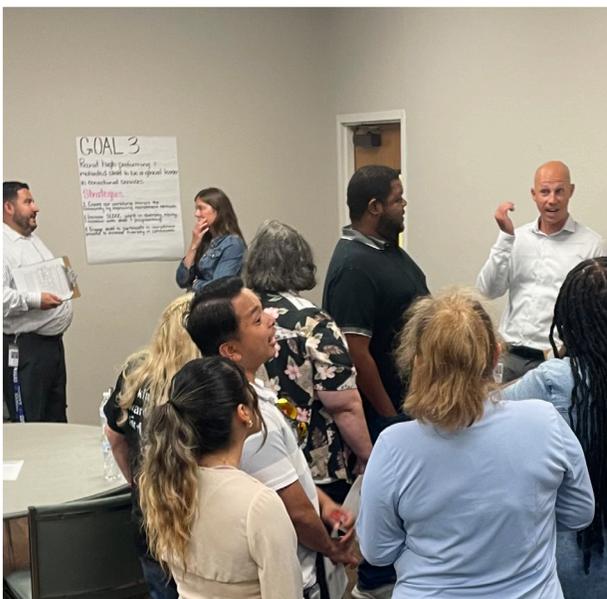
## Goal 1: Communication

Effectively communicate our purpose and community impact to staff and stakeholders.

### Key Performance Indicators:

- A. Increase community engagement and awareness of the department with staff and external partners by 5 percent annually (create a baseline in 2024).

| Strategies  | Ownership | Timeline |
|---|-----------|----------|
| 1. Increase community engagement and awareness of the department <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Create a strategic communications internship.</li> <li>b. Attend community events and stakeholder meetings.</li> <li>c. Develop and distribute promotional materials.</li> </ul> | Director  | 2024     |
| 2. Increase consistent and transparent communication with staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Create a SharePoint communication board.</li> <li>b. Publish a department newsletter.</li> </ul>  | Director  | 2025     |



## Goal 2: Work Culture

Foster an inclusive and collaborative work culture.

### Key Performance Indicators:

- A. Increase employee job satisfaction by 5% each year, as measured by the annual employee survey.

| Strategies  | Ownership       | Timeline |
|---|-----------------|----------|
| 1. Launch and embed Kansas Leadership Center framework into workplace to foster 'lead where you are', philosophy. | Director        | 2024     |
| 2. Launch and embed Organizational Coaching Model (OCM) to promote 'coach vs. referee model'.                     | Deputy Director | 2024     |
| 3. Develop a formal recognition and incentive structure for employees.  | Senior Managers | 2025     |
| 4. Implement inclusion initiatives.   | Senior Managers | 2024     |

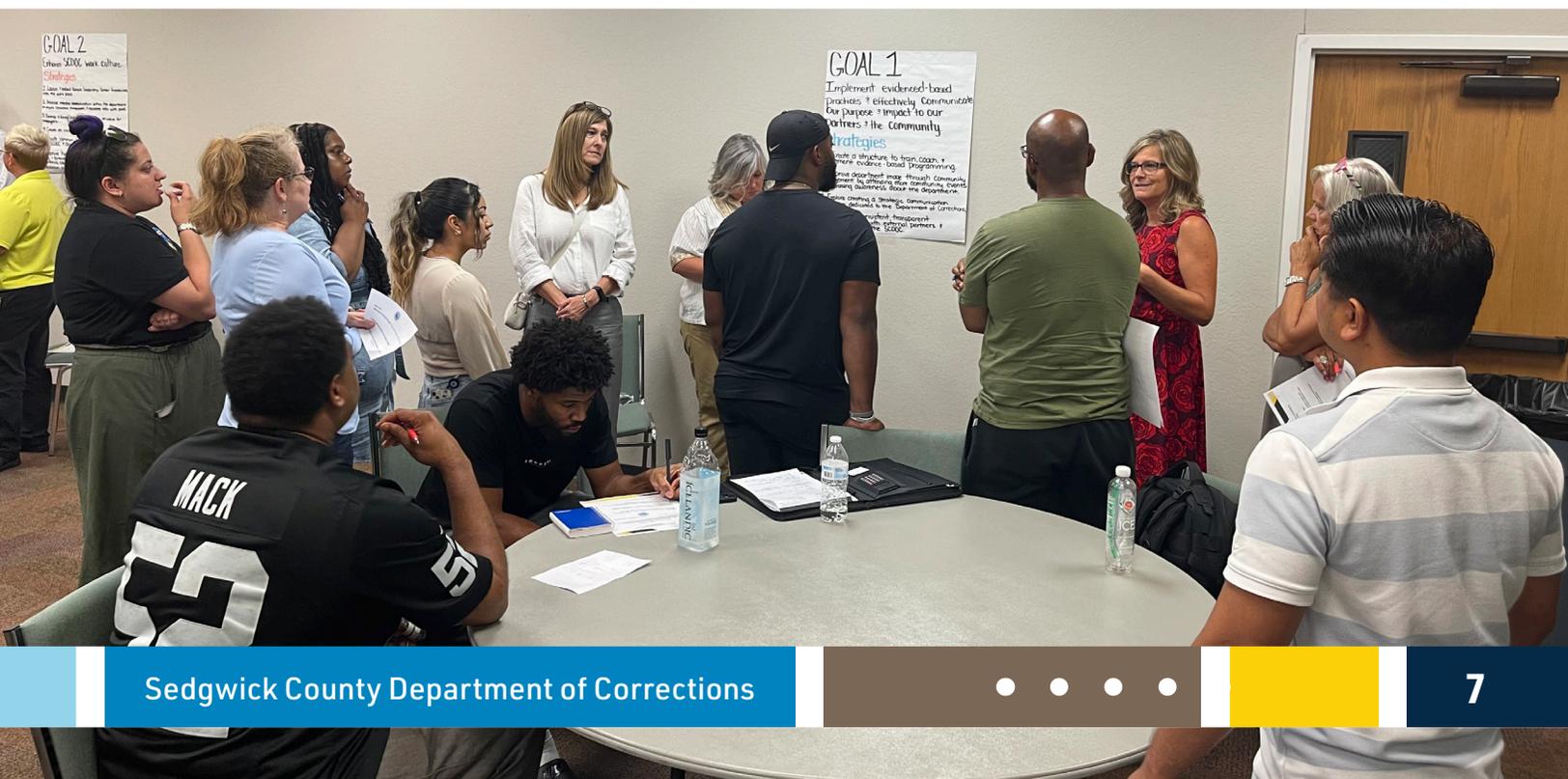
## Goal 3: Recruitment & Retention

Recruit and retain diverse, high-performing and motivated staff, mentors, and advisory boards to be correctional leaders.

### Key Performance Indicators:

- A. Improve representation of key target population in new hires.
- B. Decrease turnover by 3% each year.

| Strategies  | Ownership                                    | Timeline |
|---|--|----------|
| 1. Ensure our workforce mirrors the community.  | Continuous Quality Improvement Administrator | 2024     |
| 2. Improve recruitment methods to attract underrepresented groups.  | Continuous Quality Improvement Administrator | 2024     |
| 3. Improve internal administrative practices. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Streamline hiring</li> <li>b. Implement stay and exit interviews</li> <li>c. Capture intuitional knowledge</li> <li>d. Succession Planning</li> </ol> | Continuous Quality Improvement Administrator | 2024     |



## Goal 4: Partnerships

Leverage existing partnerships and develop new relationships to best serve clients.

### Key Performance Indicators:

- A. Increase community partnerships by 3%.

| Strategies   | Ownership       | Timeline |
|--|-----------------|----------|
| 1. Recruit and collaborate with grassroots organizations.  | Senior Managers | 2024     |
| 2. Develop a consistent convening with partners and referral agencies.   | Senior Managers | 2025     |
| 3. Advocate proactively to provide input with state agencies, local government, and public safety organizations. | Executive Team  | 2024     |



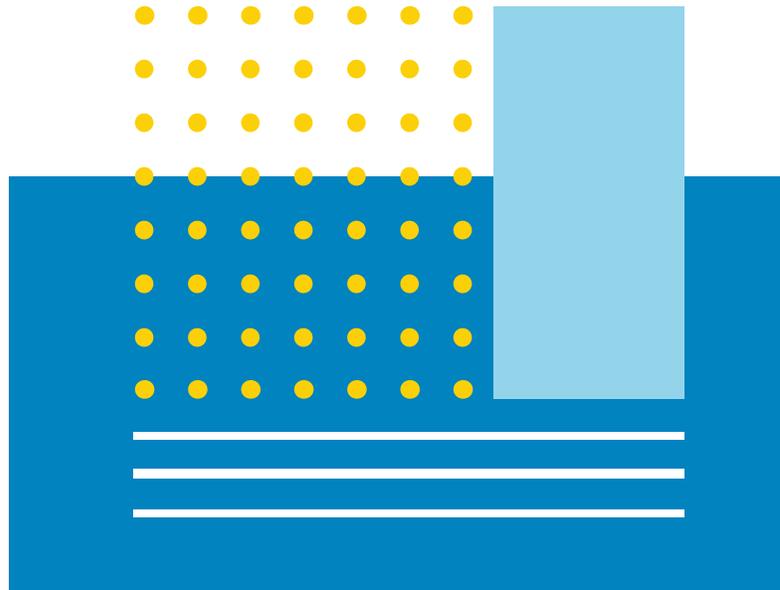
## Goal 5: Facilities & Services

Ensure facilities and programs meet clients' needs.

### Key Performance Indicators:

- A. Reduce administrative staff requirements and the number of lease agreements.
- B. Establish a baseline of clients completing evidence-based programming and determine an appropriate annual goal.

| Strategies  | Ownership       | Timeline |
|---|-----------------|----------|
| 1. Provide continuous quality improvement for evidence-based practices in our programs. | Senior Managers | 2024     |
| 2. Forecast space needs.  | Senior Managers | 2024     |



# Influencing Factors Report

## BACKGROUND

### Demographics

The Sedgwick County Department of Corrections (SCDOC) serves a population of 523,828 people across urban, suburban, and rural communities in South Central Kansas (United States Census Bureau, 2023).

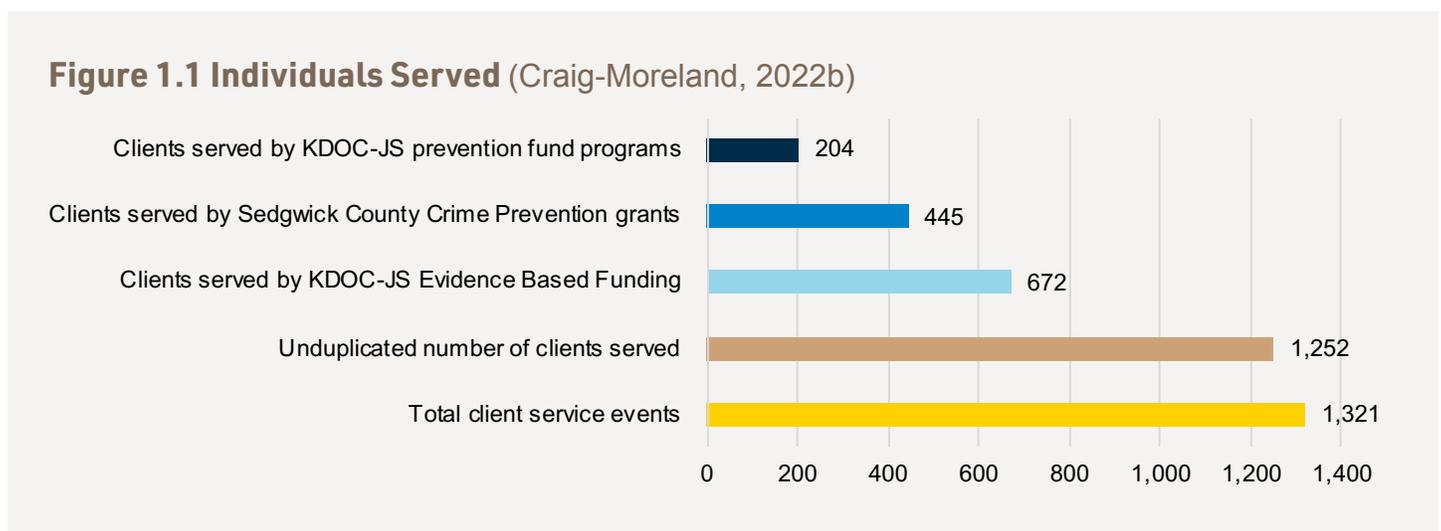
The purpose of the department is to provide a continuum of evidence-based correctional services in the community, which promotes public safety and accountability while supporting positive behavior change, in an effort to reduce recidivism. The SCDOC strives to be a model for providing innovative and progressive community-based services (Sedgwick County, 2023).

The SCDOC serves both adults and juveniles throughout the County through various programs, including:

- Pretrial Services
- Drug Court
- Adult Field Services (AFS)
- Adult Residential and Work Release
- Veterans Treatment Court (VTC)
- Juvenile Coordination of Services (COS)
- Juvenile Intake and Assessment (JIAC)
- Juvenile Detention Facility (JDF)
- Juvenile Residential Facility (JRF)
- Juvenile Home-Based Services (HBS)
- Juvenile Field Services (JFS)
- Evening Reporting Center (ERC)

(Sedgwick County, 2023).

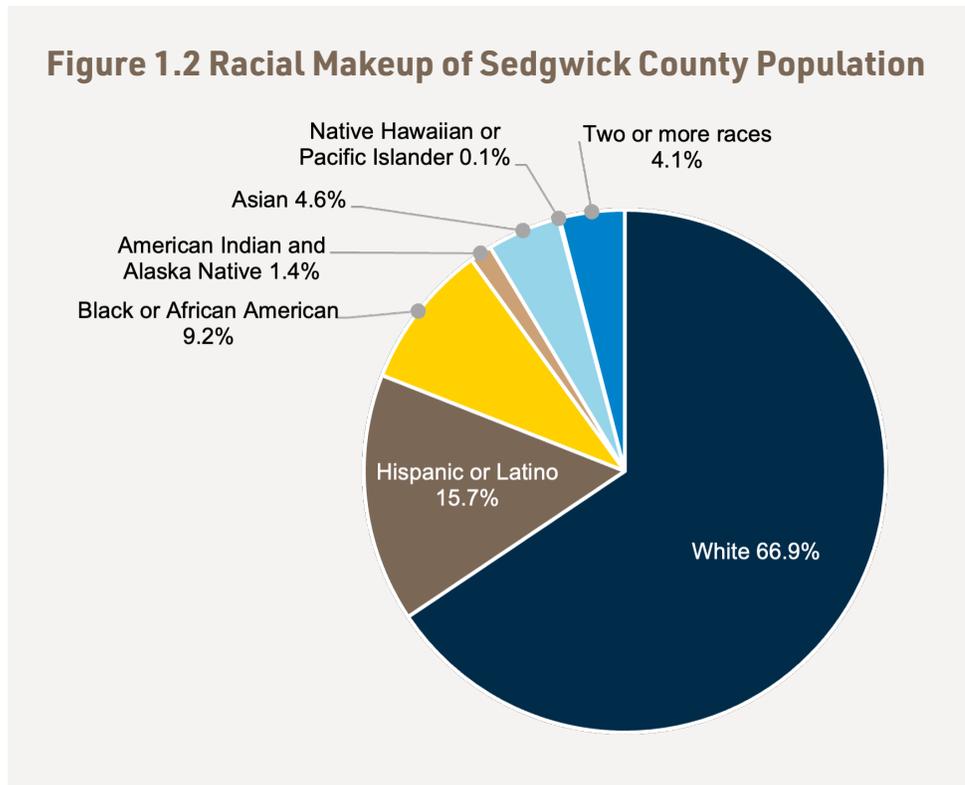
Figure 1.1 Individuals Served in FY 22



The racial makeup of the population served includes:

- 66.9% white
- 15.7% Hispanic or Latino
- 9.2% Black or African American
- 1.4% American Indian and Alaska Native
- 4.6% Asian
- 0.1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- 4.1% two or more races

(United States Census Bureau, 2023).



Half of the population (50.4 percent) identifies as female. One-quarter (25.2 percent) is under the age of 18, while 15.4 percent is over the age of 65 (United States Census Bureau, 2023).

### YOUTH SERVED

Data collected from Sedgwick County Department of Corrections regarding racial makeup of youth in detention is:

- 59% African American
- 22% Caucasian
- 19% Hispanic
- Less than 1% American Indian
- Less than 1% Asian
- 79% male; 21% female

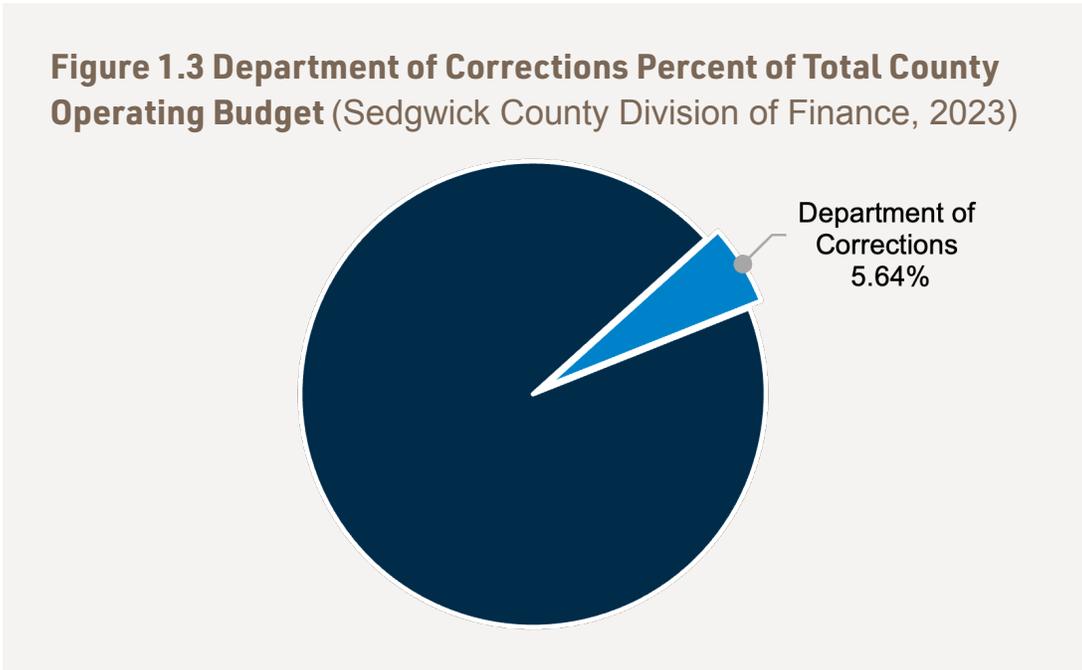
(Craig-Moreland, 2022a).

# Funding

The SCDOC budget makes up 5.64 percent of the total Sedgwick County operating budget. The actual budget for 2022 includes \$21.2 million in expenditures and \$9.8 million in revenues from Sedgwick County (Sedgwick County Department of Corrections, 2023). County funding for the department comes from the general fund.

In addition to general fund dollars, the department receives funding from various grants, including state and federal. Total external funding is \$11.4 million (Sedgwick County Division of Finance, 2023).

About \$12.7 million of the SCDOC’s budget goes towards adult services, while about \$9.9 million goes towards juvenile facilities and \$5.6 million goes towards juvenile services (Sedgwick County Division of Finance, 2023).



## Grants

### KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS ADULT GRANT

The SCDOC has been awarded about \$5.6 million for fiscal year 2023 for adult services through the Kansas Department of Corrections. These funds are intended for adult correctional services, operation of an adult residential center, and enhancement of behavioral health services for adult offenders (Sedgwick County, Kansas, 2023).

### KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS JUVENILE AWARD

The SCDOC has been awarded about \$5 million for fiscal year 2024 for juvenile services through the Kansas Department of Corrections. These funds are intended for graduated sanctions, delinquency prevention, and evidence-based programs (Sedgwick County, Kansas, 2023).

# Staffing

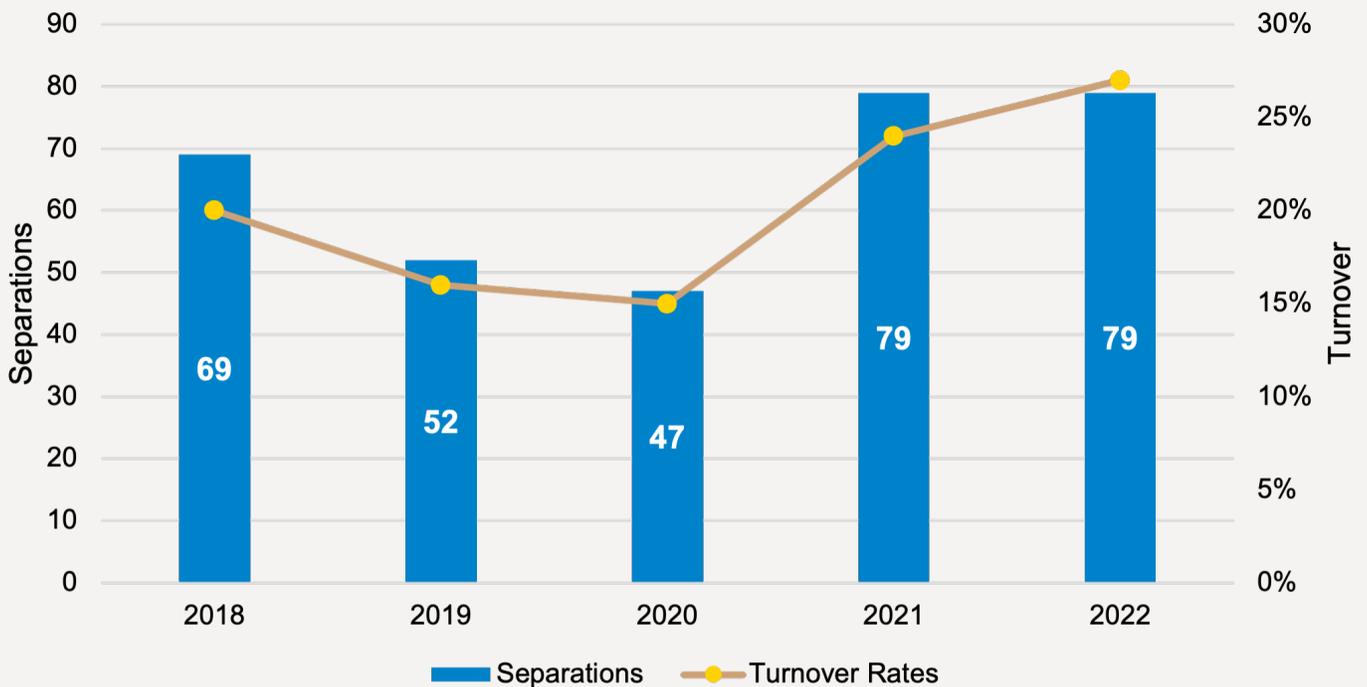
## Vacancies and Turnover

The SCDOC has 241 full-time equivalent employees budgeted for fiscal year 2023 (Sedgwick County Division of Finance, 2023). As of April 2023, there are 108 vacancies within the department, including:

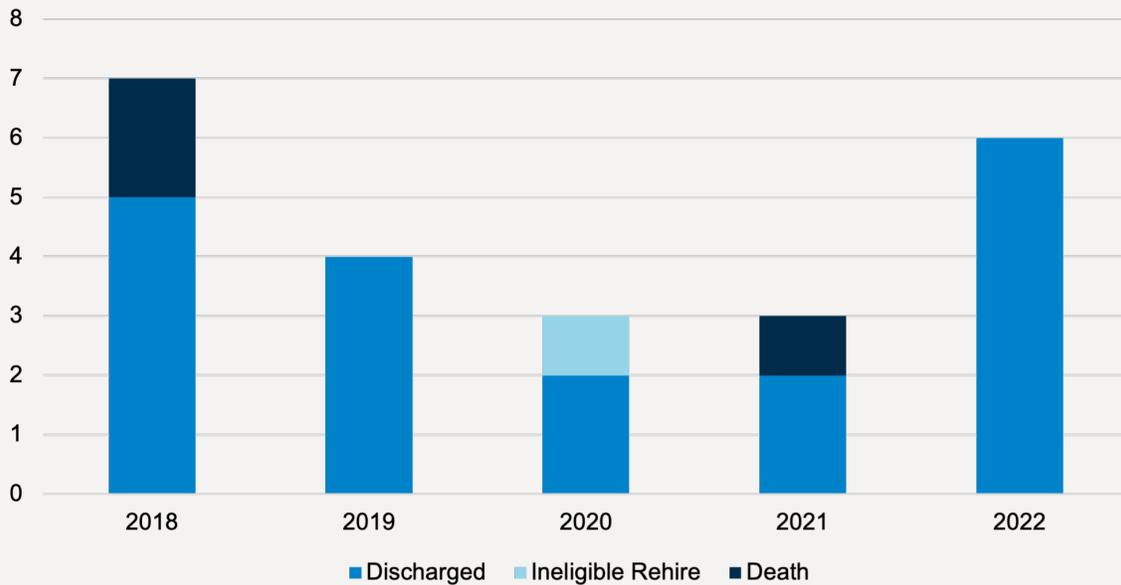
- Corrections officers
- Corrections coordinators
- Administrative support
- Control booth operators
- Corrections business administrator
- Intensive supervision officers
- Project coordinators
- Senior administrative managers

In 2022, the turnover rate increased to 0.27 from 0.24 in 2021. The charts below illustrate more information about total separations, turnover rates, and involuntary separations from 2018-2022.

**Figure 1.4 Separations by Year**



**Figure 1.5 Involuntary Separations by Year**

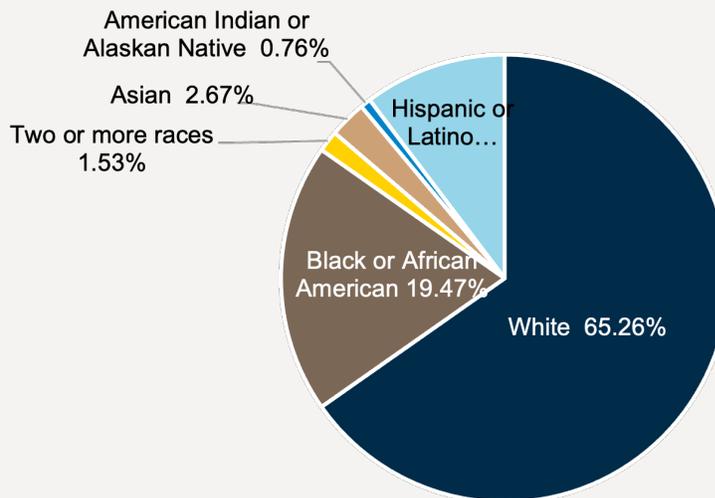


### Staff Demographics

The SCDOC has made a concerted effort to increase diversity and work towards building staff and board membership that is representative of the community that they serve.

37.02 percent of SCDOC staff identify as male, while 62.98 percent identify as female. The chart below shows racial and ethnic representation among DOC staff members.

**Figure 1.6 Staff Racial and Ethnic Representation**



## *Staff Interview Results*

In 2021, the SCDOC worked with an external consultant to conduct interviews with 137 employees across the organization. The outcome of the consultant's work identified three major areas of focus for improvement within the department: communication, consistency, and work environment.

## **Grant Projects**

SCDOC has been a forerunner nationwide in adopting new research and techniques for the betterment of its clients. Over the past several years, the department has built a strong reputation both locally and within the national corrections community as an organization that prioritizes innovative practices for improving services and reducing recidivism.

### *W. Haywood Burns Institute*

The Department of Corrections contracted with the W. Haywood Burns Institute in a grant ending in July 2018. This project came after collaboration with the Annie E. Casey Foundation and four other counties in Kansas to collect and analyze data and agree on improvements to reduce the number of youth in secure bed detention (Craig-Moreland, 2022a).

The goal of the grant work with the Burns Institute was to develop a community strategic plan for Sedgwick County. At the end of the project, the department and the Burns Institute published a final memorandum with a full data analysis of the department's historical and current policies and protocols in juvenile services (Martens, 2019).

After collecting and analyzing data, an Ongoing Collaborative Governance Structure was adopted to continue data analysis and develop reforms. This included the formation of five work groups plus a leadership committee made up of both community and system stakeholders, which focused on the five targeted populations (Martens, 2019).

The groups are listed below:

- Felonies
- Alternatives to detention program failures
- Violations of probation
- Failure to Appear warrants
- Court-ordered commitments
- Leadership committee

The work groups met at various frequencies and levels of success, with only the group focused on violations of probation producing a work product (Martens, 2019).

As the grant ended, SCDOC continued the work through shifting the focus towards reengaging the community. This included facilitating community listening sessions and conducting a community survey of assets and needs to assist youth from diverse backgrounds in positive development (Craig-Moreland, 2022a).

Community engagement work culminated in a virtual community summit that helped inform the Juvenile Corrections Advisory Board (Team Justice) of community priorities for reducing racial and ethnic disparities in the justice system (Craig-Moreland, 2022a).

### *John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation*

In 2007, the SCDOC was selected to participate in the DMC (Disproportionate Minority Contact) Action Network. The network was a component of the Models for Change: Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice initiative supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

The DMC Action Network program included a goal to reduce disproportionate minority contact and the department was selected due to its achievements in the following areas:

- Commitment by system leaders to identify and modify system policies and practices toward reducing DMC
- Development and utilization of data-driven approaches to reduce DMC
- Reduction of DMC at one or more key decision points throughout the continuum of the juvenile justice system
- Determination to building a viable continuum of alternative programs and diversion services to reduce entry and further penetration into the juvenile justice system
- Willingness to report on present, current, and future efforts in order to further the national knowledge base in DMC reduction

Being a part of the DMC Action Network provided a chance for the department to share its knowledge, policies, and practices that have helped decrease disproportionate minority contact in the community with other departments and organizations across the country.

## **Community Taskforce Recommendations**

In September 2021, Cedric Lofton died while in custody at the Sedgwick County Juvenile Intake and Assessment Center (JIAC). A Community Taskforce to Review Youth Corrections Systems Standards was created. This taskforce was to “review and recommend preferred system improvements after the incident and death of Cedric Lofton” (Sedgwick County, n.d.). The taskforce made recommendations for Sedgwick County 911, Kansas foster care, the Wichita Police Department, Sedgwick County Youth Corrections, and Kansas Youth Corrections. The section below lists only the recommendations that are specifically related to the SCDOC.

## *Overview of Recommendations*

The Department of Corrections has completed several of the Taskforce's recommended changes, including:

### **MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH SERVICES**

- Increase funding to the Juvenile Detention Facility (JDF) to provide mental health services
- Add 24/7 nursing staff to JIAC/JDF
- Ensure access to remote/virtual mental health consults 24/7 at JIAC/JDF

### **CRISIS INTERVENTION**

- Provide trauma care services (both on-site and in the community) for youth who experience a crisis event while at JIAC/JDF
- Establish calming room at JIAC for youth experiencing distress
- Separate all juveniles at JIAC from potentially traumatic events in the common areas

### **STAFF TRAINING AND EQUITY-FOCUSED PROGRAMMING**

- Require Crisis Intervention Training for JIAC/JDF personnel
- Implement ongoing implicit bias training and testing for all JIAC/JDF personnel
- Require training at regular intervals for all law enforcement, JIAC, and JDF personnel regarding mental health, trauma, cultural and gender diversity, and implicit bias
- Create database of grassroots organizations serving youth impacted by corrections systems and regularly engage with these organizations for grant and equity-related work
- Engage and fund culturally competent and gender-responsive programming



## TRANSFERS TO JIAC

- Update JIAC medical criteria language for admission Form 8.804 requiring current and accurate information prior to transfer
- Implement memorandum of understanding between Wichita Police Department and JIAC requiring a complete arrest report before youth is released to JIAC
- Do not allow juveniles in wrap restraints to be brought into JIAC
- Require law enforcement to stay on the scene at JIAC until allegedly combative or non-compliant juveniles are processed
- Do not allow a single JIAC worker to handle intake for a juvenile described as “combative”
- Update the use-of-force policy for JIAC by July 1, 2022 to limit the use of restraints, allow youth time to calm down in times of crisis, require video/audio recording of all incidents of restraint, and allow for “tapping out” of staff when necessary

Several of the Taskforce’s recommendations are in progress, including:

### *Local policy changes*

- Move towards restorative justice system for all juvenile systems
- Prioritize a video and audio recording system at JIAC covering the lobby and holding rooms in upcoming budget updates

A work group convened by the Community Engagement Institute (CEI) at Wichita State University is currently working to address the following recommendations.

- Support expansion of the statewide Crossover Youth Practice model implementation to every judicial district in Kansas and develop local protocols to serve youth involved in child welfare and juvenile justice systems
- Strengthen the Individual Justice Plan (IJP) process
- Recruit community volunteers for Crossover Youth Practice Model

### *State policy changes*

- Support the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Coalition’s legislative agenda to increase the number of mental health professionals in Sedgwick County
- Request a legislative post-audit to examine the implications of the “stand your ground” laws, particularly for law enforcement

One recommendation has not yet been addressed by the department: create and staff a citizens’ review board for JIAC and JDF, with quasi-judicial powers. This recommendation is beyond the scope of the department’s work and must be completed by the judicial district (Sedgwick County, n.d.).

## SECTION 2: TRENDS AND THEMES

### Reducing Recidivism

Research from the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) suggests a number of reforms that can help reduce recidivism. These include—but are not limited to—offering robust education and training opportunities, providing mental health services, helping incarcerated people maintain family ties, and reducing the use of solitary confinement and restrictive housing (United States Department of Justice [USDOJ], 2017).

#### *Current Efforts by Sedgwick County Department of Corrections*

During 2020 and 2021, one of the department’s key initiatives included reducing recidivism. To work towards this goal, each program was required to complete a program review every three years, with performance measures and outcomes publicly reported each year (Department of Corrections, 2021).

Some steps that the department has taken to reduce recidivism include:

- Coordinating drug court intervention program for felony offenders with addiction issues
- Using effective case management to hold youth accountable for their behavior
- Providing evidence-based cognitive behavioral programming with fidelity at the appropriate intensity for youth at risk of justice system involvement and youth currently in community case management
- Providing effective behavioral health interventions and evidence-based programming to reduce probation revocations and recidivism in a targeted population of adult felony offenders with mental health, substance abuse, and heightened risk to reoffend

(Department of Corrections, 2021).

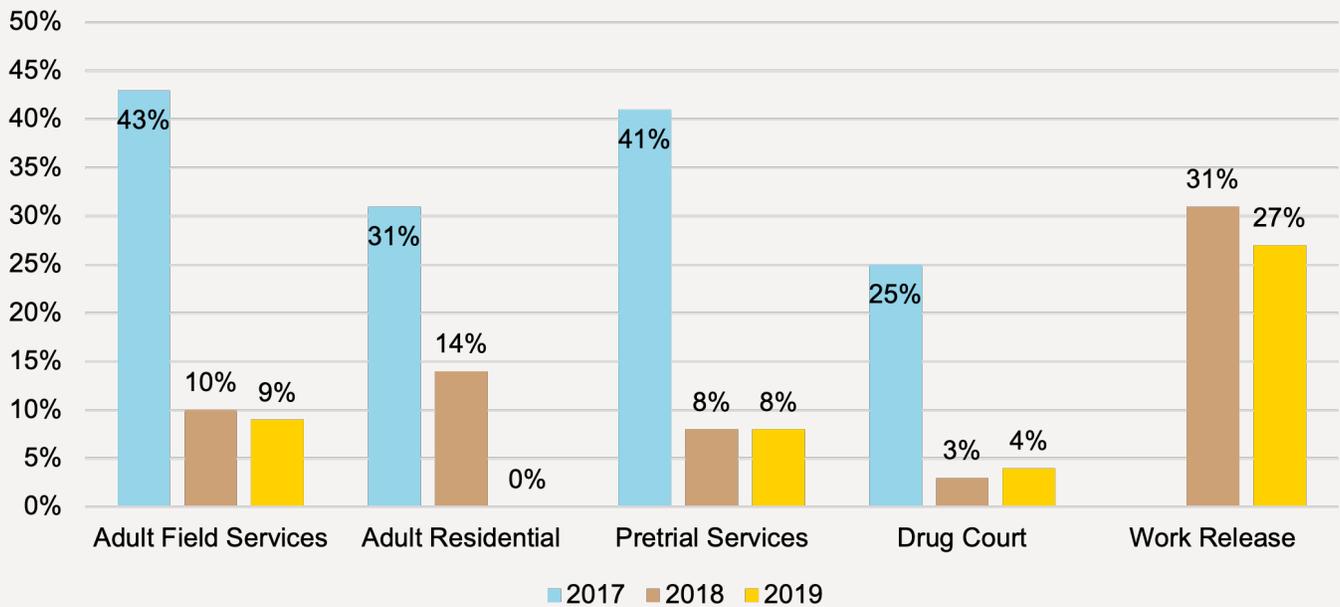
There are 25 current community partners in reducing recidivism.

#### *Education and Training Opportunities*

Incarcerated people who participate in correctional education programs are 43 percent less likely to return to prison (USDOJ, 2017). Educational programs focused on goals such as earning high school

diplomas, completing post-secondary education, achieving higher literacy, or training for careers can be helpful for incarcerated people. Expanding opportunities for individuals with learning disabilities and creating an individualized plan for each person can help ensure that education programs are

**Figure 1.7 Recidivism Percentage by Program**



effective and helpful to incarcerated individuals (USDOJ, 2017).

People who complete job training or work in prison industries while incarcerated are also less likely to recidivate (USDOJ, 2017). Occupational training can increase incarcerated people’s quality of life and ability to provide for themselves and their families after their release, making it less likely that they will have continued contact with the criminal justice system.

### *Mental Health Services*

Prioritizing mental health services is vital to reducing recidivism. The Department of Justice recommends providing cognitive behavioral therapy and other evidence-based treatment programs to incarcerated individuals (USDOJ, 2017). Additionally, secure mental health step-down units can provide housing and treatment for incarcerated people with serious mental illness and/or a significant history of violence. Dedicated mental health staff should be placed within restrictive housing units (USDOJ, 2017). It is important to balance the safety of incarcerated individuals while meeting their mental health needs and ensuring fair and respectful treatment.

## *Maintaining Family Ties*

Helping incarcerated people maintain family ties can be a major factor in reducing recidivism. Close and positive family relationships also increase the likelihood of individuals finding and keeping jobs after their release and ease the harm of being separated from loved ones for both the incarcerated individuals and their families (USDOJ, 2017). Organizations can encourage maintaining relationships by:

- Allowing video-conference visitation
- Creating child-friendly visitation spaces
- Training staff to interact positively with children
- Educating incarcerated people on how to keep in contact with children in foster care
- Providing tip sheets for parents, staff, and mentors to support children of incarcerated parents or parents of incarcerated children
- Holding family reunification events

(USDOJ, 2017)

## *Work Environment*

Staffing and retention is an ongoing concern for the corrections sector. While there are several pathways for addressing these issues, some recommendations include clarifying the mission of the sector, improving work environment and conditions, and developing future leaders within the organization.

## *Clarifying Mission*

The corrections sector—both nationally and locally—is rapidly changing. One step organizations can take to improving staffing and retention is by creating a clear, common understanding of their mission and vision (Russo, 2019).

In the past, corrections has often been viewed as custodial, surveillant, or punitive. Now, the focus is instead on behavioral change and human services (Russo, 2019). While this shift may seem obvious to some, taking the time to clarify this mission with staff can go a long way in providing individual staff members with purpose, clarity, and motivation to better serve the individuals they interact with on a daily basis. Including staff in adopting an official mission and vision statement can help give them ownership and responsibility in carrying out the goals of the organization.

Additionally, embracing a human-services model can attract larger numbers of employees, addressing vacancy issues (Russo, 2019). In turn, it can create more manageable workloads, a less stressful work environment, and better outcomes for incarcerated individuals.

## *Work Environment and Conditions*

A key to recruiting and maintaining staff is ensuring a safe and healthy work environment and conditions. Some ways that corrections departments can pursue this goal include:

- Create an environment that promotes sound operational practices
- Review lessons learned from good and bad experiences
- Review operational practices regularly to improve work environment
- Improve facilities using new technologies
- Promote staff communication
- Implement a staff safety action plan
- Create opportunities for staff to participate in decision-making, particularly about issues that affect them
- Explore creative operating structures that allow for increased input from staff
- Develop best practices for pushing decision-making authority to lowest possible levels
- Provide proper training for worker safety
- Reexamine paramilitary structure to provide more flexibility
- Seek feedback from staff on their concerns regarding safety, crisis situations, mental health, work overload, etc.

(Stewart & Brown, 2001; Russo, 2019).

## *Developing Future Leaders*

The corrections sector generally has not prioritized preparing staff for supervisory and management roles (Russo, 2019). Creating and implementing a plan for leadership development can help departments make strides in employee retention; the plan should include training, nurturing, and developing staff from the beginning of their careers in the department (Russo, 2019). Developing future leaders can not only support retention but can also lead to improved services and increased safety.

## *Communications*

Strategic communication—both internally and externally—is vital to building trust with staff and the community. The department could adopt strategies to improve its current communications systems to share more accurately what the SCDOC is doing and how it is continually working to improve.

## *Current Strategies*

Some strategies already being used by the department include:

- Engaging the community in problem-solving to reduce Racial and Ethnic Disparity (RED) by facilitating collaborative stakeholder input
- Sharing updates on social media through Sedgwick County and Sedgwick County Sherriff pages
- Providing stakeholders with concise, accurate, and useful reports each year
- Conducting an annual survey of stakeholders
- Using phone surveys and comment cards to gather feedback from families of referred youth
- Working to consistently improve communication with employees

(Department of Corrections, 2021).

## *Telling the Department of Correction's Story*

Over the past several years, the SCDOC has pursued a series of projects to improve the quality of their services and environment. However, the public may not be aware of this ongoing work within the department. Moving forward, the SCDOC should consider how it can positively connect with the community to tell their story, receive feedback, and build trust within the community.

Some best practices for communicating with the public include:

- Integrate traditional and online media outlets
- Create opportunities for public engagement through channels and events both within and outside of the agency
- Show progress, new information, or actions as proactively as possible
- Follow up on commitments and seek feedback
- Recognize and thank partners and the community
- Develop relationships with people in the community who have influence/platforms
- Communicate progress points or lessons learned
- Gather data through surveys, interviews, or focus groups
- Use existing venues and resources (governing body meetings, public events, website, email newsletters, etc.) To celebrate new approaches, partnerships, or successful outcomes
- Create strong network for information sharing with stakeholders and community groups
- Look for ways to maintain ongoing connection with community members

(Institute for Local Government, 2013).

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

In February 2022, Sedgwick County hired a consultant to develop a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) plan. The County took this step after a series of reports and complaints of discrimination and racism within the organization (Hack, 2022). After the consultant's contract is complete, the County plans to hire a DEI officer (Hack, 2022).

DEI efforts are particularly important for SCDOC, as the department interacts with a wide range of people from different backgrounds on a daily basis, both internally and externally.

### *Strategies for Recruiting a Diverse Workforce*

Some tips for recruiting a more diverse workforce include:

- Understand what constitutes diversity, including race, gender, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientations, and beyond
- Train staff to recognize their own conscious and unconscious biases
- Evaluate diversity of current team and complete internal culture assessment
- Develop a common language focused on DEI and respect
- Network with diverse groups
- Recruit externally
- Be clear, but as broad as possible in job descriptions to attract diverse talent
- Evaluate job descriptions and requirements to ensure inclusive language and remove unnecessary barriers
- Select an inclusive interview team
- Use the screening process to include rather than exclude to avoid missing strong candidates
- Avoid making assumptions about candidates' ability to conform or "feel comfortable" in the position or environment
- Avoid prematurely labeling one or more candidates as "most promising" until all have been considered
- Create affinity groups for staff to join
- Develop a DEI performance indicator to track concrete goals and timelines to meet them
- Engage employees in local and statewide diversity committees

(Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences, 2013; Washington State Department of Corrections, 2023)

# Facilities

Facilities challenges can arise within the corrections sector as departments work to make safe spaces for both staff and individuals served. There has been a shift within the broader corrections sector to move towards services that can help rehabilitate people—especially youth—within their communities and prevent them from returning to the judicial system (Pitts, n.d.). As corrections departments pursue this goal, they must change their physical buildings to become not only safe and secure, but also humane, person-centered (and child-centered when necessary), and flexible enough to allow a range of services (Pitts, n.d.). Overall, it is important for facilities to be adaptable, holistic, and family-friendly in order to best support incarcerated people in their paths to re-entering society (Treanorhl, n.d.).

## *Creating Space Conducive to Rehabilitation*

When creating spaces for rehabilitative services, corrections departments should keep the following themes in mind:

- Trauma-informed design
- One-site service delivery
- Separate, safer housing
- Treatment-based programming and housing
- Alternative educational space
- Life skills and training
- Family involvement

## CONCLUSION

Over the past several years, SCDOC has taken meaningful steps to improve services. Recently, leadership turnover and increased public attention has called for changes within the department to continue to better serve the community.

Moving forward, the department will focus on the following areas:

- Reducing recidivism
- Building a safe and supportive work environment
- Establishing consistent leadership, communication, and development practices
- Communicating effectively with both staff and the community
- Pursuing effective diversity, equity, and inclusion practices
- Ensuring safe facilities that are conducive to rehabilitation

The department will work with both internal and external stakeholders and partners to employ best practices in these areas. Consistent communication and public engagement will be vital tools as the department works to continuously improve.



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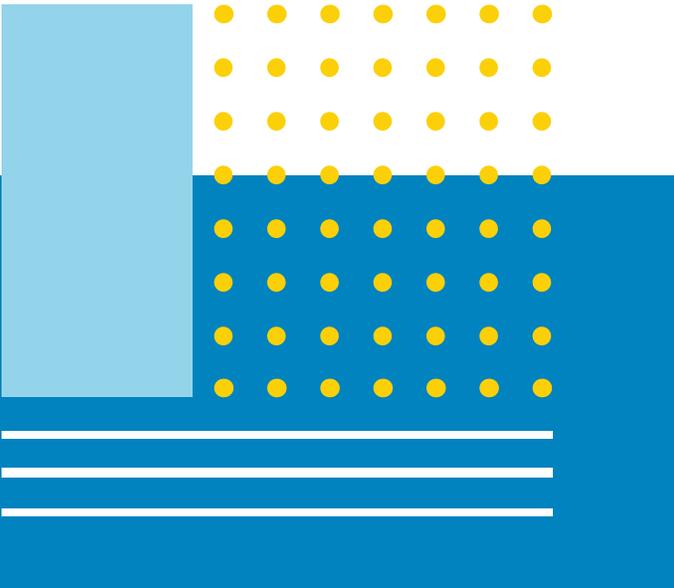
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# Stakeholder Engagement

## Background

The Public Policy and Management Center (PPMC) hosted focus groups and interviews between March 7 and April 7, 2023, to gain input regarding the Sedgwick County Department of Corrections (SCDOC) as part of the strategic planning process. SCDOC executive team provided the names for interviews and focus groups. The PPMC facilitated the session and conducted the interviews.

Focus Groups included SCDOC Internal Leadership Team, Corrections Advisory Board, Team Justice, and the Community Taskforce to Review Youth Corrections Systems Standards Taskforce. Individual Interviews were conducted with Terri Moses (USD 259); Marie McNeal, Jeff Butrick, and Megan Milner (KDOC); and Tom Stoltz and Commissioners Baty, Lopez, Howell, and Dennis (Sedgwick County).

Overall feedback was consistent in the following themes:

## Strengths of the Department

The executive team is responsive to requests and is great to work with on system issues. The leadership demonstrates the importance of partnerships to address large issues within corrections and are quick to respond to requests. They are thoughtful public servants and take the work and their role seriously and professionally. Leadership is committed to continuous improvement. Specific examples include:

- **Community Task Force:** Community Task Force recommendations were taken seriously by the department. Leadership was actively engaged in the work and provided unbiased, transparent information. Leadership respected the work of the Task Force and quickly instituted recommendations, as possible.
- **Funding:** There have been, and continue to be, funding challenges for the department. Leadership is professional and advocates for change to best serve the community. Partners and those engaged with the system acknowledge the impact of the financial limitations of SCDOC.
- **Leadership:** Participants noted that SCDOC has a strong history of being an industry leader. The past few years have presented challenges, but there is a strong legacy of the professionalism and innovation in the leadership of this department.
- **Court Appearances:** Staff are well prepared for court appearances. This is an often-unseen part of the work, but a crucial part of the justice system.

## Community Engagement

Respondents encouraged the SCDOC to increase community engagement to continue to build relationships. Community engagement will help with recruiting diverse employees to reflect the community served. Further engagement also leverages the trust built through The Community Taskforce, and there is an opportunity to engage Taskforce members to join advisory councils. Promoting opportunities for volunteering is another way to build engagement and trust with the community. The department may promote existing opportunities through partner organizations or determine other chances for volunteer help. The intent is to build bridges to the community which requires continuous engagement and relationship building.

## Communicating SCDOC Story

Interviews and stakeholder feedback indicate a general lack of understanding of the partnerships and services of SCDOC. Suggestions from participants include:

- Develop a flow chart of services.
- List partners and services provided.
- Highlight partners and the good outcomes of SCDOC collaboration, such as Drug Court and high school graduations.
- Capture testimonies of those served.
- Continue to share the purpose of the work.

Participants encouraged the department to use data to get more State, County, and community support and resources. In addition, others suggested simplifying and reducing the amount of information on the website for more easily understood information and stronger social media presence.

Finally, the purpose of the SCDOC work is critical and not well understood. Lives are changed for the better; success stories provide community benefit. Leading and speaking to purpose in all interactions is important to ensure clarity, inspiration, and overall support.

## Retention and Staffing

With new leadership, and on the heels of COVID challenges, staff have an aversion to more change. Internal leadership wants investment and consistency to get the inexperienced staff trained and onboarded well: “returning to the basics,” and “doing what works,” were frequently repeated phrases.

External partners note a lack of consistent communication with the frontline or new employees. Participants noted an opportunity to clarify roles and responsibilities to ensure the correct people are engaged to best utilize resources.

Workforce shortages were mentioned often. In addition, acute pay compression that needs to be addressed was discussed, as well as an overall concern to continue with pay increases for all. In addition, there is an opportunity for intentional and strategic succession planning and internal capacity building around current and future organizational needs.

In recruitment, there is an opportunity to connect the meaning of the work (see communication notes) with the position openings. Participants noted an opportunity to appeal to potential SCDOC recruits through the lens of social impact. There were suggested examples of potential recruits attending a graduation to connect with the impact of the work.

## Gap In Services

Noted in many of the interviews was the gap in services for juveniles. One issue is a residential juvenile facility. Several comments stated that even with a Juvenile Residential Facility at full strength, this is not enough to fill the need. In addition, there were concerns over the foster care system placing juveniles in an already overtaxed system. One participant asked, “What are we doing to rehabilitate kids?” Finally, some participants believe SCDOC has a leadership opportunity to address the system-wide gap in juvenile services regarding prevention, however, this would be difficult.

There is a knowledge gap regarding the fundamental elements of the Crossover Youth Practice Model. The Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM) is a comprehensive approach used by the Sedgwick County Kansas Department of Corrections to address the needs of youth who are involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. The model is grounded in the principles of trauma-informed care, family engagement, and evidence-based practices. The model aims to reduce the number of youth who crossover between the two systems and improve outcomes for those who do. The CYPM involves collaboration between child welfare and juvenile justice agencies, as well as community partners, to provide a coordinated and individualized approach to addressing the needs of crossover youth. The model includes screening and assessment, case planning, service coordination, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Overall, the CYPM represents a promising approach to improving the lives of youth involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. The reduction of prevention funding over the years has had an adverse impact on the support and implementation of prevention programming and launching new initiatives.

There is also a gap in mental health and substance abuse services to meet the growing need. There are currently no substance abuse beds for juvenile females and males 10-15 years of age. Juveniles between the ages of 10 to 16 must go outside Sedgwick County for inpatient services.

Another gap in service is the deferred facility maintenance and the financial impact of rental facilities across the city. Participants encouraged SCDOC to evaluate the possibility of a public, private, and nonprofit partnership to create a localized hub of services to juveniles. SCDOC could be a leader for justice system providers in creating an aspirational vision for serving juveniles and their families through a partnership with the private and nonprofit sectors.

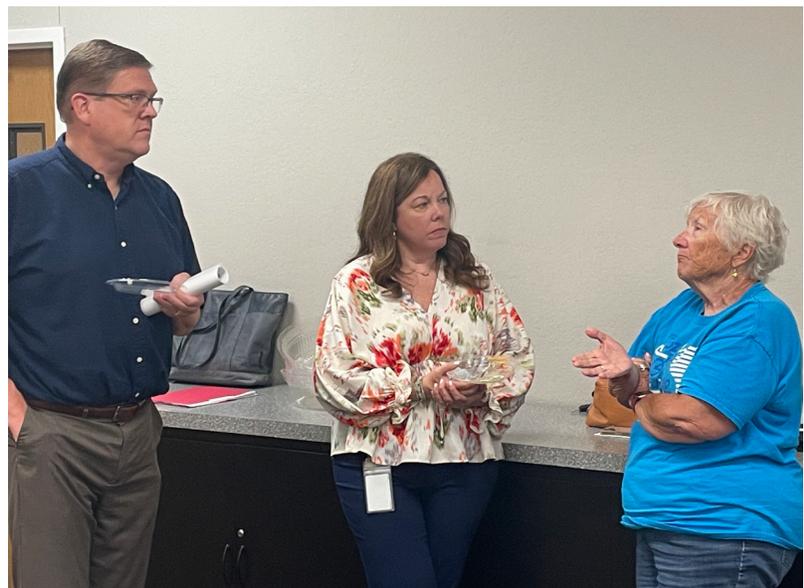
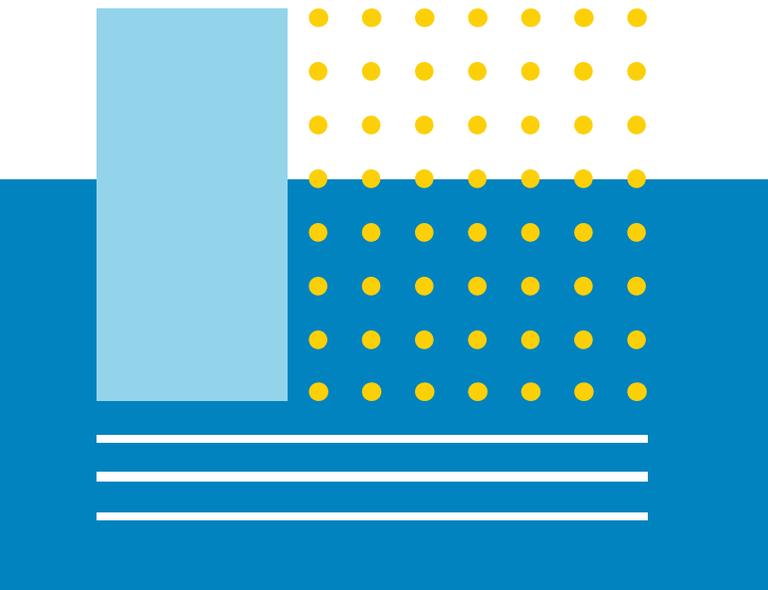
## Engagement with Other Government System Partners

There were several conversations about improving engagement with other government system partners. Suggestions from participants to increase engagement include:

- **Establish regular meetings** with the local District Attorney’s office, judges, and public defenders to build trust and communication and educate on evidence-based practices.
- **Share more information with the State** (KDOC and legislature) regarding the intensity of clients SCDOC serves. Building relationships with these State entities to understand the unique needs of SCDOC clients is important for future cooperation.
- **Commit to positive messaging** that communicates, “we are all working towards the same goal.” Examine if the internal messaging is one of unity or division.
- **Leverage the expertise** of the SCDOC. Participants shared SCDOC has always been on the forefront of innovation in the State, and there is an opportunity to leverage that leadership role to improve the overall system of care.

## Transitioning Adults

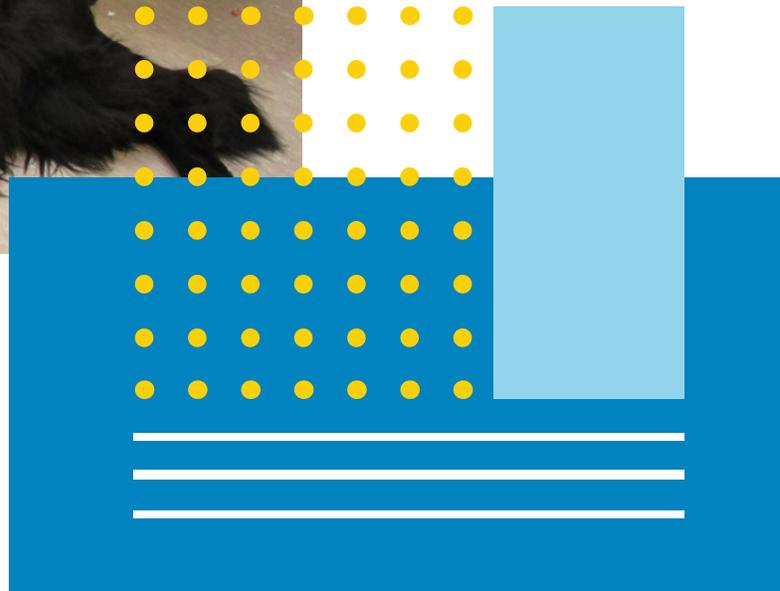
Finally, participants identified the need for additional focus on transitioning adults successfully. Concerns regarding housing and too few beds available for those who qualify were discussed. Re-entry programs and second chance employers’ resources are needed, as well as support systems. Some discussed the need to connect more with businesses willing to engage in the work.



## Appendix B

# Community Event

The Sedgwick County Department of Corrections invited community partners to weigh in on the strategic planning goal areas and strategies. On July 20, 2023, the public was invited to attend a brief presentation from Steven Stonehouse, Director of SCDOC and learn more about the direction of the strategic plan. Thirty-seven participants from 18 organizations attended the event and provided feedback to inform this strategic plan.





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*working for you*