

**RECLAIMING LOST-GROUND FOR VERMONT'S INCARCERATED WOMEN:
The Disturbing Conditions at Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility**

February 2012

This white paper is the collaborative effort of a consortium of organizations that work with women prisoners, and state and community leaders, many of whom have labored in the field of corrections for more than 20 years. The content herein reflects familiarity with best practice in the field and the direct and observable experience by members of this consortium at CRCF. It is the product of meetings facilitated by the United Way of Chittenden County and is informed by a listening session conducted by the VT Commission on Women with prisoners housed at CRCF as well as a session conducted with facility staff. Our paper is intended as an invitation to work in collaborative partnership to improve current conditions at the facility and to forge a new approach to working with women in corrections.

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THE DECISION TO RELOCATE INCARCERATED WOMEN

A year ago, Governor Peter Shumlin announced his intention to relocate approximately 160 incarcerated women at the state's prison facility in Swanton (NWSCF) to the state's regional detention center in Chittenden County (CRCF). The proposal was introduced as a means of saving the state money during a budget shortfall and reducing recidivism by bringing women closer to their children, re-entry supports, and transitional programming in the Burlington area.

UPDATE: Approximately 25 sentenced inmates (out of a possible 110) are from the Chittenden County area.

The physical constraints of CRCF and the deteriorating condition of the facility were acknowledged at that time, and Administration officials committed to several capital improvements, among them the creation of a welcoming family visitation center, as well as a special transition unit to enable significant numbers of inmates to leave the facility to find work or pursue education and training programs that the facility could not accommodate.

It was argued that the prison's limitations, and the small number of women in custody, gave the Vermont Department of Corrections, in collaboration with various contract providers and community organizations working with women offenders, an opportunity **to create a new correctional paradigm**. It was hoped that the new paradigm could reduce the 50 percent recidivism rate among the state's incarcerated women (mirroring national trends) and send women back into the community as productive mothers, workers and citizens.

Vermont has long been recognized as a leader in correctional reform and innovation. We endorsed early the concept that gender matters in shaping correctional policy and practice. In 2005, we focused an entire agency—the Agency of Human Services—on “bending the curve” of women entering Corrections (and, for the years in which the Incarcerated Women's Initiative was a priority, it did). The Department of Corrections has funded vocational, parenting, domestic abuse, and mentoring programs for women that have attracted national attention.

Since the relocation of Vermont's incarcerated women to CRCF in August 2011, an interim parent/child visitation center has been completed. Certain policies that had been regular practice at CRCF when it served as a detention center – mandatory strip searches after visits to the yard and pat-downs after meals -- have been relaxed.

UPDATE: We are not aware of a standard policy at CRCF that required mandatory strip searches after trips to the yard for either male or female inmates. Mandatory strip searches were part of contact visiting and still are. Procedures around pat searches and strip searches of female inmates were updated in September of 2013 in response to increasing evidence of drug use and trade. Relaxing procedures in areas of inmate safety are not gender responsive and in many cases put staff and inmates at increased risk of harm. Being gender responsive deals with how staff interacts with a female inmate while conducting appropriate security procedure (not in relaxing or stopping sound security practices).

UPDATE: Drug testing indicates a 46% positive rate for all tests conducted from Jan 2013 and Sep 2013. The positive rate after restoring appropriate search practices in September contributed to bringing the positive rate down to 34% in the final three months of the year (-12% reduction by DOC database records). CRCF also leads the DOC in convictions for possession/use/introduction of drugs for Nov 2013 through Jan 2014 compared to being fourth in the DOC the prior three months. Increased attention to security practices is creating a safer facility for female inmates.

It is clear to those of us who work with the Department that DOC central office and facility personnel have worked hard to anticipate and address the myriad issues involved in changing a prison's mission. **However, six months into the transition, there are disturbing signs that we're not only falling short of the Governor's vision, but are on track to erode a decade's worth of progress in our work with incarcerated women.** We must face this reality squarely and address the conditions at CRCF before policy and practice are fully formed, before we forget that the move was to be so much more than a cost-saving measure. Immediate steps must be taken to ensure the health, safety and human dignity of Vermont's incarcerated women.

PREVIOUS CONCERNS ABOUT CRCF CONDITIONS FOR SENTENCED POPULATIONS

When the women's move from NWSCF to CRCF was announced, no one tried to equate the Chittenden facility to its counterparts in Swanton or Windsor; by the Department's own analysis, the facilities do not compare. A 2007 DOC report to the Legislature's Corrections Oversight Committee advised against transitioning CRCF to a women's facility on several counts, among them, limited bed capacity to accommodate future population growth and a physical plant in "relatively poor shape" that was originally designed, not as a prison, but to meet the temporary needs of up to 88 detainees.

"While women inmates pose a lower escape and security level than men, several of them have long sentences, and loss of the program opportunities currently available at SESCOF (Windsor) for extended periods would have deleterious effects...This facility has an inadequate medical and mental health space and limited work and program space." (*Plan to Reduce Correctional Costs and Achieve Savings for Reinvestment*, VT Department of Corrections, December 2007, pp. 30-31)

WHY THE SITUATION AT CRCF IS SO PROBLEMATIC

This is the state's fourth relocation of its incarcerated women in 11 years; the third in the past 8 years. Much has been made of the fact that the average length of stay of the 1,200+ women per year who cycle in and out of custody is 65 days. **But over half of the women in prison on any given day are serving sentences of a year or more (see attached table).** While a short sentence could perhaps be tolerable in a detention center, the conditions described below are inappropriate in a prison.

CRCF differs from NWSCF and SESCOF in a number of critical ways detailed below. It's clear from these comparisons that Vermont's incarcerated women have lost significant

ground in terms of the facilities, services and programs that were once available to them to facilitate successful transitions back to their communities:

1. *An ailing physical plant and crowded conditions that compromise physical health, personal safety, and human dignity.*
- Most of the state's correctional facilities are in need of repair – but Chittenden is in especially poor condition. Women report that:
 - There are recurring worms and sewer flies in the shower drains.
 - Hot water is not always available, or is too hot.
 - The heating system is uneven or shuts down periodically, leaving the women without adequate warmth during winter months.
 - The electrical system is insufficient to meet basic needs. Some four-person cells have just one electrical outlet, limiting access to fans in hot weather in a prison with no air conditioning and few windows that open.

UPDATE: BGS treats the drains by steam cleaning quarterly. CRCF staff treats the drains each week with a chemical provided by BGS. To the best of our knowledge the issue with sewer flies has been eliminated or significantly reduced.

Since the start of 2012 CRCF has undergone significant physical plant improvements to include:

- *New air handlers for education, infirmary, booking*
 - *New exhaust fans for all buildings*
 - *Two new boilers*
 - *Dedicated Digital Controls (computer thermostats) for all units to regulate room temps*
 - *Booking garage LED lighting*
 - *Recreation yard and parking lot LED lighting*
 - *New bathrooms installed in House 1 and 2, Echo and Delta*
 - *Air conditioning units in Delta, Foxtrot and Echo*
- General population pods at NWSCF had a 1:2 ratio of toilets to inmates. The ratio for inmates within CRCF's H units is 3:40 (or 1:13). National prison standards set by the American Corrections Association suggest a ratio for women of at least 1:8.

UPDATE: This is an unfair comparison between NWSCF Pods (wet cells) and CRCF House Units (dry cells). By definition wet cell units would have a much lower ratio of toilets to inmates when compared to a similar sized dry cell unit.

NWSCF J Unit (dry cells) has a ratio of 1 toilet for every 8.6 inmates.

CRCF has installed additional toilets in House One, House Two, Echo and Delta. This was accomplished by converting cells. The new ratio of toilets to inmates in these units is:

- *House One and House Two is 1 toilet for every 6.3 inmates*
- *Delta is 1 toilet for every 7.3 inmates*
- *Echo is 1 toilet for every 6.6 inmates*
- *The facility average is 1 toilet for every 4.6 female inmates*

This appears to meet the standard suggested by the 2012 white paper.

- Women at CRCF are not issued uniforms as they were at NWSCF and, as a result, do not always have either enough clothing or have clothes and footwear that are appropriate for varied weather conditions.

UPDATE: All female inmates at CRCF are provided with uniforms, socks, sweat pants, sweat shirts, underwear and bras. All inmates were issued winter coats in the fall of 2013.

- At NWSCF, women were housed 1-2 to a cell; at CRCF, 2-4 women share a cell.

UPDATE: No change. This is a reality of our physical plant. Windsor and Dale CF also used four-person cells to house female inmates.

- Women at NWSCF and SESCOF were allowed access to the yard three times a day most of the year, where they were able to garden and take long mile-walks around the facility; at CRCF women have access to far less space an average of three times a week. Moreover, access to the yard is not easily accessible by wheelchair, which has limited one inmate to a single visit outside since August.

UPDATE: CRCF provides daily opportunities for access to the yard for general population inmates up to three times per day. During the summer of 2013 there were several occasions where yard access was limited by staffing availability. Since then it has been an exception that the yard has been closed due to staffing issues.

CRCF records the numbers of inmates that access outside recreation for each time slot on our end-of-shift reports. The first offering of the day tends to have the lowest interest.

For over a month now the cold weather has brought interest in outside recreation to near zero. We have been regularly offering open gym instead of outside recreation when interest has been low.

Improvements to the walking path were made in the summer of 2012. Volleyball court installed in the yard summer of 2013. Gardens went into use summer of 2012 and CRCF has a master gardeners program through education.

Improvements to all the fire doors were made to allow handicap access to the yard. Ramps were installed in place of the step down so that wheel chairs could easily exit the unit.

- The gym is crowded and does not offer enough aerobic options, which are especially critical given the lack of yard space and the link between depression and lack of exercise.

UPDATE: The CRCF gym is used weekly for volleyball, yoga, and soon will add Zumba. Open gym is scheduled daily. In addition to the gym we offer a workout room that includes weights, four treadmills, two elliptical machines and two stationary bikes. Over \$5,000 of additional cardio equipment was acquired after the arrival of the female population.

2. *Limited opportunities to work and build marketable skills.*

- Women report not having enough to do. NWSCF had approximately 80 full-time facility jobs and an additional 31 training positions through which inmates could earn money to save or use for phone calls or commissary purchases. Prior to the move, there were only 30 CRCF full-time jobs. To enable more women to work, more jobs were created by splitting up full-time positions. The truncated shifts, and the fact that CRCF has many fewer opportunities overall for day-long work or training has limited opportunities to earn money and resulted in unstructured time with little to do.

UPDATE: CRCF has been working on several enhancements to the existing worker program. Once completed we believe that CRCF will have 59 paid jobs (kitchen, facility, CHSVT and VCI).

This total is still fewer than what was available for the women when they were at NWSCF but our current program does provide a fair and consistent system and mimics employment practices that inmates will experience upon release:

- *Comprehensive employment application*
- *Clear job descriptions*
- *Performance-based pay*
- *Progress reports*
- *Training opportunities*
- *Clear pathways for feedback*

CRCF will be moving an existing post to take on the responsibilities of a Work Crew Supervisor to provide additional oversight of the worker program and build value through the security ranks. This position will also ensure that our standards of a 6-hour work day are applied to all positions.

We will be implementing a new pay grade system that provides transparent pay rates for all worker positions based on level of difficulty, training needed, job responsibility and security supervision requirements.

New restrictions on the number of jobs a single inmate may have will also open up opportunities for inmates. CRCF has been allowing an inmate to hold as many as three jobs and receive full pay from each. This ultimately blocks other inmates from taking advantage of the program. We anticipate that once this new system is fully implemented that more inmates will be employed than in the past.

CRCF puts on a quarterly worker incentive dinner for inmates that earn enough points to attend. The points can be earned by accomplishing various goals and the inmate with the highest number of points is allowed to select the dinner.

- While work crew provides job experience, it is not like the automotive, construction, or print shop programs at Northwest -- designed to develop employability and technical skills that are transferable, nor are these jobs in fields for which there is a ready market. Other opportunities, such as Harley Time and Servsafe workshops, which certainly provide women with valuable exposure to the fields of motorcycle maintenance and food service, are too brief or infrequent to be considered job training.

UPDATE: Work crew has done some vocational training based on specific jobs (barn painting, restoration, environmental restoration) but these have been limited. The crew also was trained in lead abatement last summer.

- Plans are underway to establish a new correctional industry for six to eight workers in sewing, a field in which there are dwindling employment opportunities.

UPDATE: The sewing shop for VCI is functional and employs up to six inmates. We do not dispute the concern that there may be limited opportunities in this field in the community but this argument also exists in VCI for male inmates. The availability of furniture manufacturing jobs in Vermont is becoming scarce and license plate fabrication is non-existent. VCI does provide inmates with higher paying wages and matches savings that enable them to make a more effective transition to the community.

CRCF VCI has yet to reach full potential due to limited work/contracts.

3. *Transitional, or Delta, unit members are isolated from regular prison programs*

- Those who participated in work programs at NWSCF lived throughout the prison and had access to all facility programs. The 22 women who serve on work camp crews or who are on work furlough in the community must live in the small, segregated Delta unit, in isolation from the rest of the facility, which limits their participation in a number of programming activities available to the general population. It is impossible for many providers to offer programs in both sections of the prison because they do not have the additional resources to essentially double their offerings and because separate space in the transitional unit for programming is almost nonexistent. While CRCF has hired two community service work crew leaders, crews do not go out every day because there is a lack of work. As a result, Delta unit residents spend many hours each day with little to do. This runs counter to the original vision; Delta was supposed to have provided a healthy range of transitional supports to the women it housed, ensuring the adequate preparation and transition of these women back to their myriad Vermont communities..

UPDATE: Delta is no longer isolated from the rest of the facility. Inmates housed in that unit are able to participate in all facility activities to include education, meals and recreation.

Although the unit houses 22 inmates, only a portion of that group are used in the community. Several participate in crews that work on facility grounds and others are used in other facility jobs (usually due to medical issues).

4. *Fewer caseworkers and high staff turnover.*

- In spite of an average daily population that is comparable to that at Windsor or Northwest, the number of caseworkers available to women has been reduced over four years from 7 to 5. As a result, the women have fewer opportunities (and less time per session) to meet with their caseworkers in order to map out strategies for successful re-entry. Inmates tell us that several of the caseworkers refrain from making trips to individual units due to the overwhelming crush of women who have questions, need to be advised, etc.

UPDATE: Five CSS staff gives us a ratio of about 1 case worker to 32 inmates which would appear appropriate on the surface but the female population requires much more intensive involvement from DOC staff when compared to the male inmates.

Although case notes are not a perfect method for calculating the amount of work a CSS does it symbolizes some interaction with inmates or providers. In so far as case notes capture events the evidence shows that CRCF CSS staff is conducting a tremendous amount of work with a fraction of the staff.

Using December as a sample month the number of case notes has increased in each of the three years that females have been at CRCF from 455 in 2011, 480 in 2012 and 1346 in 2013.

CRCF CSS staff is averaging 1188 case notes per month from October 2013 through December 2013. By comparison NSCF averages fewer case notes during the same time period (1000) yet has over twice the number of inmates and case work staff.

- Retaining Correctional Officers (CO) at CRCF appears to be a significant challenge. This is in part because of the facility's comparably higher number of part-time positions. CRCF has eighteen part-time Correctional Officer positions out of 77; NWSCF has 6 part-time CO positions out of 86. Moving from part-time to regular status with benefits often requires that an officer leave CRCF since there are fewer regular positions there. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that CO's at CRCF are reported to be asked to work overtime routinely. These conditions can seriously compromise consistency in practice and limit a prison's knowledge base. While this may not be as much of an issue for a detention center, it has significant consequences for a prison.

UPDATE: During fiscal year 2013 a total of seven temporary security positions were converted to permanent spots. CRCF roster is now allocated nine TCO positions (with two more on temporary loan from NWSCF).

Overtime at CRCF has been reduced considerably since September 2013 with a reduction in COI/COII overtime hours from 1500 to 400 per pay period. CRCF staffing levels are now among the best in the DOC as of February 2014. Mandatory OT at CRCF is now the exception instead of the rule.

COI/COII attrition rate for August through October 2013 was 11%. For November 2013 through January 2014 we are currently at 5% attrition rate. Attrition for COI/COII was calculated using average daily number of staff divided by resignations and retirements.

CRCF classified overtime cost is now running the third lowest in the DOC compared to being highest in the State just five months ago.

The recent improvement in the staffing situation has had a positive effect on the inmate population. Unusual Incident Reports have dropped off dramatically to include noticeable reductions in self-harming behavior and self-harming statements as well as historic lows in uses-of-force involving incarcerated females.

Convictions for Major DR's involving interfering with CO, disruptive behavior, sexual acts, indecent exposure, derogatory comments, misuse of meds and stealing are all lower for November 2013 through January 2014 compared to the prior three month sample. The total number of major DR's written for both time periods has remained consistent.

5. Medical/Mental Health services struggle to meet inmate needs

Our initial discussions with facility personnel indicate that mental health and medical services at CRCF are compromised by the prison's size, its role as a receiving facility, and demand for services that is significant and constant. While we have not attempted a thorough comparison of mental and medical services at NWSCF and CRCF, we feel it important to share the following:

- Those who work with this population for some time describe inmates at CRCF as particularly depressed and expressing little hope. "The women are bored," one person noted, "with increased anxiety. The meds are causing them to sleep all the time, which increases their depression." Inmates report

that while they complete mental health referral forms upon their arrival, it can take weeks to receive services. There is no mental health staffing at the facility at certain periods of each day/evening. A new infirmary, which is slated for construction soon, will reduce the size of the already-crowded mental health unit.

UPDATE: Beginning February 4th, there will be unit "town-hall" meetings every Tuesday from 6-6:50 and 7-7:50 in the visiting room. Each week 2 units will meet with the H.S.A. and possibly guest speakers from various walks of life to discuss:

- The general environment and the issues that surround having down time, being away from family, health concerns, etc..*
 - Services and opportunities within the facility that can be accessed such as exercise equipment, various groups, etc..*
 - An exchange of ideas for a wellness initiative that first was thought of as a result of talks between the Superintendent and H.S.A. What can be done to improve inmate health physically and mentally.*
 - Opportunities for discussion and input on topics of concern to inmates regarding the overall environment and how to cope with being in such a facility*
 - Increased collaboration between mental health, medical and security to identify and respond to at-risk inmates in need of additional support*
 - This will be an evolving process and communication between the H.S.A. and units between meetings needs to be worked out-at the most basic level it creates a dialogue and provides inmates an opportunity to be involved in a process designed to improve their wellness and hopefully help develop a stronger culture of coping and involvement.*
- Medical personnel, with whom our group met recently, reported that because CRCF is a receiving facility, and must respond immediately to conduct medical intakes of newly-arrested individuals, their availability to inmates is more limited than was true at NWSCF. This is compounded by the fact that a large share of their time is simply spent dispensing medications to 90% of the inmates three times a day, consuming approximately 2 ½ hours of staff time at each round. Staff projected that the creation of an infirmary (as opposed to sending individuals to Fletcher Allen, which is the current practice) is likely to put additional pressure on medical services at CRCF if no additional staff are hired to treat infirmary patients.

UPDATE: In response to the need for a balance between the acute issues in booking and the long-term population in the health center, a physician has been

added to the staff one day per week and a second provider has been practicing one day per week. This has allowed for a provider on site each day m-f and 2 providers on site one day per week. Chronic care appointments and health and physicals have been up to date and the response rate much stronger.

The infirmary is most often at a manageable level. On a few occasions there have been up to 4 patients, which at times results in the need of additional staff. Most often the current staffing is able to meet the needs of the infirmary patients and the provider does daily infirmary rounds.

There does continue to be no direct mental health staff on duty during 2nd and 3rd shift. The increased collaboration between medical, mental health and security has created an awareness that enables medical staff to be prepared and to access on-call mental health providers when needed. The high volume of inmates with mental health needs does create a back log at times. CRCF now has a Psychiatrist on site on Fridays to see inmates and to offer support to the Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner. The current hope is that the increased collaboration across staff in the facility, and the efforts to be proactive and meet regularly with inmates to address and problem solve identified concerns or ideas will help improve the climate in terms of a healthier and less anxious population.

Security, medical and mental health staff meets at several times throughout the day to share information relative to the safety and well-being of all inmates. These meetings can encompass a wide variety of issues from serious medical problems to indicators that the inmate may be exposed to stresses from sources outside of the facility.

These conditions run counter to the assurance local service providers were given by Commissioner Pallito in March 2011 that substance abuse and mental health services available at NW “will move with the women. There will be no cuts to those services.”

The idea that a significant number of women will spend a year or more at Chittenden should be of concern on any number of levels, but *especially* in light of a September 2011 report submitted by the New Hampshire Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

UPDATE: *A majority of the females currently incarcerated at CRCF have a minimum release date less than a year from now*

In it, the Committee found a lack of parity between men and women in that state’s prisons and recommended immediate action. A description of conditions, services, and

programming at NH State Prison for Women in Goffstown is eerily familiar to the conditions, services and programming being offered to women at Chittenden.

“Designed only for short-term detention, the women’s facility is a maze of small meeting rooms and offices joined by narrow hallways. Extremely overcrowded with inmates and staff, common spaces are cramped and noisy. Many rooms serve multiple purposes... This creates a scheduling dilemma for the staff and inmates alike...

“The space devoted to industry is a small portion of a single room for a handful of sewing machines. There is no space for vocational training beyond limited computer access for basic training in word processing and data entry... This lack of space makes it difficult to impossible to provide essential services to address the needs of the prison population.”

Vermont is historically creative, resourceful, and collaborative. We can *leverage* CRCF’s limitations to forge an approach to corrections that is consistent with best practice, responsive to the needs of women under correctional custody, and achieve our ultimate aim: to staunch the flow of nonviolent offenders cycling in and out of this state’s prisons. Women may well represent a small percentage of the state’s prison population – but their incarceration is disproportionately expensive in light of their exponential growth in number (600% since 1995), if viewed from the perspective of their frequent role as single parents, and if one considers the significant collateral costs that flow from their imprisonment (*Lengyel 2006*).

Members of the consortium listed at the beginning of this paper, a diverse group of organizations addressing and funding issues related to housing, education, domestic violence, job training, substance abuse, and mental health services, have developed a set of recommendations -- some immediate, others that we acknowledge will require changes in policy or statute – that are critical to incarcerating fewer nonviolent offenders, save taxpayer dollars, ensure equal treatment of men and women in Vermont prisons and assert our standing as an innovative leader in the field of corrections.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We must take **immediate** steps to ensure inmate health, safety and human dignity:

- ✓ Make facility improvements to shower drains and provide consistent access to heat and hot water
UPDATE: Mostly resolved. Some heating issues remain in various, but limited areas of the facility. Current issues tend to involve cells being warmer than desired.
- ✓ Install additional toilets to bring their ratio to inmates in line with those in state prisons
UPDATE: Resolved.
- ✓ Provide inmates with uniforms to ensure their access to clothes that are clean and appropriate to varied weather conditions.
UPDATE: Resolved.
- ✓ Equip the gym with aerobic machines that will contribute to better mental and physical health.
UPDATE: Resolved.

We must align programming with best practice and gender-responsive principles:

- ✓ If we cannot create a number of full-time jobs comparable to that available at men's facilities, increase the rate of pay for such jobs so that women have an equal opportunity to earn money while in prison and develop new opportunities for employment outside the facility.
UPDATE: Partially resolved. Over 35% of the female population is employed at jobs that are designed to provide six hours a day of work. This percentage does not include the females that are also in the Delta work camp. We believe that this percentage is comparable to number of inmate workers at other facilities. The pay structure in current use is generally higher than that at a male facility. The facility is in the process of starting a Work Crew Supervisor (COII position) that will be used to better coordinate our resources, provide on-the-spot feedback to the workforce and help increase the quality of the worker program at CRCF.
- ✓ Develop a system of meaningful incentives that will reward positive behavior and participation in programs.

UPDATE: Resolving. Starting January 2014 we began an organized incentive program that includes behavior and case plan compliance. Our first month kicked off with a live band. Prior to this there were several incentive programs that were essentially competing against each other. We are now working to have a single plan that addresses the needs of all providers and encourages pro-social behavior.

Inmates and providers have been assisting us in creating the incentive program so that it works seamlessly throughout the facility.

As part of the redesign of the incentive program, we are incorporating incentives that will help connect women to the activities/programs they participate in. This is meant to elevate the sense of connectedness and value that women will get from their participation. An example of this is a chef's toque in which a woman could earn for participating in her job and she would be able to wear the toque in the kitchen increasing her self-worth and connection with other women. This also includes incentives that will connect women to the, "outside" world to include shipping boxes, stationary, activity books that they can do with their children, etc... We are still in the development stage and have a committee including all program providers and women representatives from the programs.

- ✓ Provide a range of programs that address individual needs and optimize transitional skills. Provide training to staff in gender-responsive principles and the impact of incarceration on trauma survivors.

UPDATE: DOC core comps are designed to be gender responsive. DOC Academy uses CRCF staff to teach the lesson plan on supervising female inmates.

- ✓ Allow women in the segregated unit greater access to facility-based parenting and education programs and the opportunity to participate in off-site community-based programs.

UPDATE: Resolved. Delta has full access to the facility resources. Unable to address off-site programming.

- ✓ Take immediate and long-term steps to reduce staff turnover at CRCF to provide continuity of service, ensure consistency in gender-responsive practice, and foster consistent relationships among inmates and DOC staff.

UPDATE: Staffing resolved for now. CRCF staffing is currently strong and forecasted to remain positive through the start of the summer. Attrition rates are dropping and demands on staff are becoming manageable.

- ✓ Restore the two caseworker positions we have lost since 2008.

UPDATE: No progress. CRCF management supports increasing the number of casework staff. Decisions based only on caseload numbers are too simplistic for a female facility.

Female offenders bring additional needs which increase the time and resources the CSS staff must dedicate compared to male offenders.

We must institutionalize our commitment to addressing the needs of women under correctional supervision so that it remains a consistent priority:

- ✓ Create in statute a state Commission on Women Offenders that can serve as both resource and advisor in shaping correctional policy and practice for women in state custody. The Commission will report regularly and make annual recommendations to the Commissioner of Corrections, and the House Institutions, Senate Judiciary, and Corrections Oversight Committees and will work with state partners to help forge a long-term vision for women in state custody.

We are at a critical juncture. If we do nothing to address the conditions identified in this paper, we can be assured that the investments we have made over the past decade will have been squandered. We must be clear: this is not a problem for the Department of Corrections to solve alone. It is a problem that all of us – courts, police departments, legislators, corrections personnel, advocates, educators, caseworkers, service providers, and the Administration – must shoulder together, in concert, without blame and with compassion. Only then shall we realize our goal of a different corrections paradigm.