

Sec. X. WOMEN'S CORRECTIONAL FACILITY REPLACEMENT; WORKING GROUP; REPORT

(a) Creation. There is created the Justice-Involved Women Working Group to advise the Department of Corrections on the replacement of the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility with trauma-informed and gender-responsive facilities and programming to promote the successful rehabilitation and re-entry of justice-involved women.

(b) Membership. The Working Group shall be composed of the following members:

(1) not less than four representatives of community-based organizations that provide services to justice-involved women at the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility, including:

(A) the Executive Director of the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence or designee;

(B) the Executive Director of Vermont Works for Women or designee;

(C) the Executive Director of Mercy Connections, Inc. or designee; and

(D) the Executive Director of Lund, Inc. or designee;

(2) the Executive Director of the Vermont Commission on Women or designee;

(3) the Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union Vermont or designee;

(4) a representative of the Prisoners' Rights Office, appointed by the Defender General;

(5) the Executive Director of the Vermont Interfaith Action Committee or designee; and

(6) not less than two individuals with lived experience with incarceration in the criminal justice system, appointed by the Vermont Commission on Women.

(c) Powers and duties. The Working Group shall collaborate with the Department of Corrections to create a plan for the replacement of the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility that:

(1) incorporates trauma-informed and gender-responsive design principles;

(2) uses a data-driven approach that aligns with Vermont’s criminal justice reform objectives in developing the proposed size and scale of replacement facilities;

(3) includes a re-entry facility;

(4) integrates the Working Group’s input on programming and services provided by the Department of Corrections to justice-involved women in correctional facilities and re-entry settings;

(5) includes participation from a focus group of women currently experiencing incarceration; and

(6) ensures involvement by the Department of Corrections, the Department of Building and General Services, individuals with expertise in the criminal justice system, interested stakeholders, and others designated by the Working Group.

(d) Assistance. The Working Group shall have the administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Department of Corrections and the Department of Building and General Services.

(e) Report. On or before February 15, 2024, and annually thereafter, the Working Group shall report to the House Committees on Corrections and Institutions and on Judiciary and the Senate Committees on Institutions and on Judiciary on any progress and recommendations.

(f) Meetings.

(1) The Executive Director of the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence or designee shall call the first meeting of the Working Group to occur on or before July 15, 2023.

(2) The Committee shall select a chair from among its members at the first meeting.

(3) The Committee shall meet not less than six times per year.

(3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

(4) The Working Group shall cease to exist on July 1, 2028.

(g) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Working group shall not be entitled to per diem compensation or reimbursement of expenses.

Sec. X. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.