

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Corrections

March 2015



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0018
Facebook: Pennsylvania Auditor General
Twitter: @PAAuditorGen**

**EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL**

March 11, 2015

Honorable Tom W. Wolf
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Governor Wolf:

This report contains the results of a performance audit of the State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh (SCI Pittsburgh) of the Department of Corrections (Department) for the period July 1, 2009, to June 30, 2013. The audit was conducted under authority provided in Section 402 of The Fiscal Code and in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

The report details the audit objectives, scope, methodology, and findings. The audit objectives were as follows:

- To determine if SCI Pittsburgh provided vocational education to inmates that improved their ability to find employment and reduce reincarceration rates.
- To determine if programs provided by community corrections centers (CCC) and community contract facilities (CCF) improved residents' ability to find employment and reduce reincarceration rates.

The report contains the following findings:

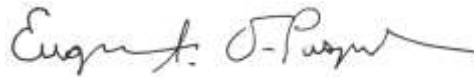
- SCI Pittsburgh and the Department failed to collect, maintain, and analyze data to determine whether vocational education programs that are financed with taxpayer money are effective to help inmates find employment and to reduce reincarceration rates.
- Community corrections centers and community contract facilities provided programs to assist their residents to reintegrate into society. However, neither SCI Pittsburgh nor the Department monitored residents to determine if the programs improved residents' ability to find employment or if the programs reduced the residents' rate of reincarceration once released.

The report also notes that the institution implemented our prior audit recommendations related to the fleet maintenance and our recommendations related to the maintenance work order system.

We discussed the contents of the report with the management of the institution, and all appropriate comments are reflected in the report.

We appreciate the courtesy extended by the management of SCI Pittsburgh to us during the course of our audit. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Joseph D. Weale, CPA, Acting Director, Bureau of State Owned Audits, at 717-705-4126.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eugene A. DePasquale". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eugene A. DePasquale
Auditor General

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

**Table of
Contents**

Background Information 1

Audit Objectives..... 3

Audit Results 5

Finding 1: SCI Pittsburgh and the Department failed to collect, maintain and analyze data to determine whether vocational education programs that are financed with taxpayer money are effective to help inmates find employment and to reduce reincarceration rates.....9

Finding 2: Community corrections centers and community contract facilities provided programs to assist their residents to reintegrate into society. However, neither SCI Pittsburgh nor the Department monitored residents to determine if the programs improved residents’ ability to find employment or if the programs reduced the residents’ rate of reincarceration once released.....17

Status of Prior Audit.....22

Audit Report Distribution List26

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

**Background
Information**

*History, mission,
and operating
statistics*

Department of Corrections

The Pennsylvania General Assembly created the Bureau of Corrections under the authority of the former Pennsylvania Department of Justice with the passage of Act 408 of 1953. In December 1980, responsibility moved from the Pennsylvania Department of Justice to the Office of the General Counsel under the Governor.¹ On December 30, 1984, the Governor signed Act 245 of 1984,² elevating the Bureau of Corrections to cabinet level status as the Department of Corrections.

The mission of the Department of Corrections is as follows:

Our mission is to reduce criminal behavior by providing individualized treatment and education to offenders, resulting in successful community reintegration through accountability and positive change.³

The Department of Corrections referred to as the Department throughout this report, is responsible for all adult offenders serving sentences of two or more years. As of June 30, 2013, the Department operated 25 correctional institutions, one motivational boot camp, one training academy, and 14 community corrections centers throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In addition to the 14 community corrections centers, the Department also had oversight of nearly 40 contract facilities, all part of the community corrections program.⁴

State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh

The State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh, which we refer to as SCI Pittsburgh or the institution in this report, is a minimum/lower medium security facility for adult male offenders. It is located in the City of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County.

SCI Pittsburgh is situated on 14 acres of land with 10 acres inside a secure perimeter. Housing for the inmates is provided in 1,692 general population

¹ 71 P.S. § 732-101 *et seq.* (known as the “Commonwealth Attorneys Act”).

² 71 P.S. § 310.1. By way of further background, the pre-existing powers and duties of the Bureau of Corrections under Act 408 of 1953 (P.L. 1428, July 29) were pursuant to Section 1 which added Section 911 to the

² 71 P.S. § 310.1. By way of further background, the pre-existing powers and duties of the Bureau of Corrections under Act 408 of 1953 (P.L. 1428, July 29) were pursuant to Section 1 which added Section 911 to the Administrative Code of 1929. Act 245 of 1984 (P.L. 1299, December 30) expressly repealed Section 911 and transferred all the powers and duties of the Bureau of Corrections to the Department of Corrections by adding Section 901-B to the Administrative Code of 1929, codified at 71 P.S. § 310-1.

³ http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/about_us/20857, accessed April 22, 2014.

⁴ *Ibid.*

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

units, 24 special needs unit, 346 therapeutic communities, and 60 restricted housing units.

The table below presents unaudited SCI Pittsburgh operating statistics compiled from Commonwealth accounting and the Department's reports for the fiscal years ended June 30, 2010, through June 30, 2013. By increasing its capacity and inmate population, SCI Pittsburgh reduced the average inmate cost \$7,292 per inmate or 18.4% from 2012 to 2013.

	SCI Pittsburgh Operating Statistics for Fiscal Years Ending June 30,			
	2010	2011	2012	2013
Operating expenditures	\$59,769,218	\$61,601,534	\$65,374,262	\$53,772,134
Inmate population at year end	1,687	1,666	1,590	1,802
Inmate capacity at year end ⁵	1,500	1,500	1,755	1,803
Percentage of capacity at year end	112.5%	111.1%	90.6%	99.9%
Average monthly inmate population	1,707	1,658	1,653	1,667
Average cost per inmate ⁶	\$35,014	\$37,154	\$39,549	\$32,257

⁵ Increase in capacity was due to SCI Pittsburgh opening up a new cell block during the audit period. The Department's Office of Population Management also evaluated and increased the institution's capacity during the audit period.

⁶ The average cost per inmate was calculated by dividing total expenses by the average monthly inmate population.

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

**Objectives,
Scope, and
Methodology**

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Our objective for this audit was to evaluate the performance of the Department's Community Orientation and Reintegration (COR) program at SCI Pittsburgh. We also intended on evaluating the status of inmates who were released from the institution from July 1, 2009 to present. The evaluation was to involve reviewing inmate records at the institution and if applicable, the Community Correction Center or Community Corrections Facility where the inmate was placed after release from the SCI Pittsburgh.

However, we found through our initial interviews with SCI Pittsburgh staff that the COR program was discontinued by the Department of Corrections in October 1, 2006. Therefore, our audit objectives were revised in order to evaluate SCI Pittsburgh's vocational education program and whether the program is preparing inmates to successfully find employment and reintegrate back into society once they are released from the institution.

The objectives of our performance audit of SCI Pittsburgh were further defined follows:

- To determine if SCI Pittsburgh provided vocational education to inmates that improved their ability to find employment and reduce their rate of reincarceration once released from the institution.
- To determine if programs provided by community corrections centers (CCC) and community contract facilities (CCF) improved residents' ability to find employment and reduce reincarceration rates.

The audit period was July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2013, unless indicated otherwise.

To accomplish our objectives, we obtained and reviewed records and analyzed pertinent policies, procedures, and agreements of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Department, and SCI Pittsburgh as well as interviewed various facility management and staff. The audit

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

results section of this report contains more details on the specific inquiries, observations, tests, and analyses for each audit objective.

We also performed inquiries, observations, and tests as part of, or in conjunction with, our current audit to determine the status of the implementation of the recommendations made during our prior audit. Those recommendations addressed SCI Pittsburgh automotive fleet management and maintenance work order system.

SCI Pittsburgh management is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that SCI Pittsburgh is in compliance with applicable laws, regulations, contracts, grant agreements, and administrative policies and procedures. In conducting our audit, we obtained an understanding of SCI Pittsburgh's internal controls. The controls include information systems controls, as they relate to those requirements and that we considered significant within the context of our audit objectives. We assessed whether those controls were properly designed and implemented. Any deficiencies in internal control that were identified during the conduct of our audit and determined to be significant within the context of our audit objectives are included in this report.

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

Audit Results

The audit results are organized into two sections, with one section for each audit objective. Each section is organized as follows:

- Statement of the objective;
- Relevant laws, policies and procedures and agreements;
- Audit scope;
- Methodologies used to gather sufficient and appropriate evidence to meet the objective;
- Finding(s);
- Recommendation(s), where applicable; and
- Response by SCI Pittsburgh management, where applicable.

Our evaluation of SCI Pittsburgh management's response, where applicable.

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

**Audit Results
for
Objective One**

*Provide
Vocational
Education*

The objective

Objective one of our performance audit was to determine if SCI Pittsburgh provided vocational education to inmates that improved their ability to find employment and reduce their rate of reincarceration once released from the institution.

Relevant policies, and procedures

The goal of the Department’s Bureau of Correction Education (Bureau) is to provide comprehensive educational programming to an inmate that will assist him/her in his/her reintegration into society as a responsible and productive citizen.⁷In addition, pursuant to Act 15 of 1999, the Department of Education is to “issue all Commonwealth secondary school diplomas and endorse or sponsor all other academic or vocational certificates of completion for inmates.”⁸

The Bureau’s responsibility is to develop a strategic plan and approve the institution’s educational plans annually.

The mission statement of SCI Pittsburgh’s school is:⁹

To provide educational opportunities directed to the needs of students that will help them become responsible and productive members of a diverse society.

The educational goals of SCI Pittsburgh’s school are:¹⁰

- To maintain full classrooms in all academic and vocational programs;
- To test each student as necessary for proper placement using the TABE¹¹ test as a pre and post (class entry and class advancement) measure;
- To develop a team players’ attitude, with all education staff involved in the inmate’s educational plans;

⁷ Department of Corrections, Delivery of Educational Services, policy 7.06.01.

⁸ 71 P.S. §310-9 (Section 909-B of the Administrative Code of 1929). *See also* policy 7.6.1, page 1-12.

⁹ SCI Pittsburgh Education Department Mission Statement; since January 12, 2012.

¹⁰ SCI Pittsburgh Education Department, The Educational Goals of the School, since January 12, 2012.

¹¹ Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE); is an assessment tool for class placement and classification purposes. The data from the test provides prisons with information about an inmate so prisons can place an inmate into a classroom environment that is appropriate to their skill level.

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

- To comply with Chapter 4: State Standards of Education in the development of all academic and vocational classroom curriculums;¹² and
- To provide all inmates with an opportunity to obtain General Education Development (GED) and or certification through our academic and vocational programs.

During our audit period, SCI Pittsburgh offered two vocational education programs: electrical and custodial services.¹³

Before an inmate enrolls in one of the vocational programs offered by SCI Pittsburgh the inmate must enroll and successfully pass with a test score of 70 percent on all nine modules of the core curriculum.

The core curriculum is an introductory program comprised of nine modules that teach inmates skills such as: basic safety, introduction to construction math, introduction to tools, and introduction to construction drawings. Once an inmate has successfully completed all nine modules he will become certified by the National Center for Construction Education and Research.

After an inmate has completed the core curriculum, he has the option to continue his vocational education by either enrolling in either the electrical or the custodial vocational program. The electrical program consists of two levels. Each level is designed to be completed in twelve weeks but the time needed is dependent on the inmate's ability to successfully complete the individual modules.

Inmates who enter the custodial maintenance program receive curriculum through the Telemedia Publishing Company. The curriculum teaches inmates chemical hazards, use of floor care equipment and custodial skills

Each of the vocational programs is comprised of a series of modules. For an inmate to advance from one module to the next he must pass both a written and a performance test. A passing grade is a 70 percent on the written test. A satisfactory completion on the performance test is required to advance to the next module in the program.

Scope and methodologies to meet our objective

¹² http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/state_academic_standards/19721.

¹³ SCI Pittsburgh offered four vocational programs Barber shop management; Electrical; Custodial Services; and Business Education. Only two programs were offered during our audit period Electrical and Custodial Services. The other two programs were not offered due to the teaching positions being vacant during our audit period, however, as of July 1, 2013, teachers were added and the courses programs were restarted.

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

The scope of this objective related to inmate performance in SCI Pittsburgh's vocational programs from July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2013, unless indicated otherwise.

To satisfy this objective, we performed the following:

We reviewed the mission statement and the goals posted in SCI Pittsburgh educational classrooms. Our review was focused on the vocational aspects of the education program that is provided to inmates.

We reviewed the current curriculum used by the vocational programs at SCI Pittsburgh. The curriculums for the vocational programs were developed by National Center for Construction Education and Research.

We interviewed the educational program's principal who is responsible for the educational programs at SCI Pittsburgh. We also interviewed the two teachers who taught the two vocational programs that were offered to inmates at the prison during the audit period. Both the electrical and custodial maintenance programs are designed to be twelve week programs, however, inmates progress through the program at their own pace. Therefore, the time an inmate spends in a program varies based on aptitude and the time he has available to spend working in the program.

The electrical program is designed to prepare inmates for entry level employment as an electrical technician. The custodial maintenance program prepares inmates for employment in general custodial and maintenance services. Upon completing the program students receive a certificate and are placed within the facility to assist the maintenance crew, gain experience, and improve their skills.

We reviewed the educational records of ten inmates from each of the two vocational programs offered from July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2013. We reviewed the dates inmates were placed in and were released from SCI Pittsburgh, their educational records, available employment history, parole date, and home plan which is used once an inmate is released from the supervision of the Department.

We reviewed SCI Pittsburgh's proposed educational program that was submitted to the Department's Bureau of Corrections Education which oversees the educational programs at all of the state correctional institutions.

We also read the last external audit of SCI Pittsburgh's educational program conducted by the Correctional Education Association to

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

determine if the audit disclosed deficiencies or non-compliance with Department policies.

We also reviewed the certifications of the principal and the two teachers who taught the vocational programs that were offered at SCI Pittsburgh during our audit period.

We used the Department's *Inmate Locator* web site¹⁴ to determine if the 19 inmates we selected for review were reincarcerated in a state correctional institution as of November 1, 2013.

¹⁴ http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/inmate_information/7278/inmate_locator/513574, accessed November 1, 2013.

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

Finding 1

SCI Pittsburgh and the Department failed to collect, maintain and analyze data to determine whether vocational education programs that are financed with taxpayer money are effective to help inmates find employment and to reduce reincarceration rates.

Our audit disclosed that SCI Pittsburgh and the Department did not monitor inmates to determine whether they successfully gained employment once they were released from SCI Pittsburgh.

Although employment information exists through the Department of Labor and Industry, it was not obtained, maintained, or analyzed by SCI Pittsburgh or the Department to determine whether the inmates who completed either vocational program at SCI Pittsburgh had a better employment history than SCI Pittsburgh inmates who did not complete a vocational program.

Our review of the education records of 19 inmates enrolled in the electrical or custodial vocational programs from July 1, 2009 to December 31, 2012, found that all 19 inmates completed and passed all nine modules of the core curriculum and as a result each earned a certification by the National Center for Construction Education and Research.

Inmates can present their certificate to potential employers to indicate they have basic skills needed for employment. We confirmed that the inmates' certificate is available on a national registry web site where potential employers can verify the certification.¹⁵

Our review of education records for ten inmates who were enrolled in the electrical program, found that nine of the 10 inmates completed the level 1 program. One inmate was released from SCI Pittsburgh prior to completing the level 1 certification. Eight of the nine remaining inmates also completed the level 2 program.

We reviewed the records of nine inmates who were enrolled in the custodial maintenance program. Seven of the nine inmates completed the Telemedia Publishing Company curriculum for custodial maintenance and two were released from SCI Pittsburgh prior to completing the program.

16 of the 19 inmates who enrolled in and successfully completed either the electrical or custodial vocational programs earned certificates based on the programs levels they completed.

¹⁵ <https://anr.nccer.org/ov/>. accessed September 29, 2014.

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

Our audit found that all 19 inmates were released from SCI Pittsburgh between May 25, 2010, and May 25, 2012. However, inmates are not monitored by SCI Pittsburgh or the Department after their release from the institution. Therefore, neither SCI Pittsburgh nor the Department determined whether the vocational programs provided by SCI Pittsburgh resulted in a higher employment rate among inmates who completed a vocational education program than among inmates who did not.

In addition, neither SCI Pittsburgh nor the Department evaluated the reincarceration rates of inmates who completed a vocational education program to determine whether these inmates were more or less likely to be reincarcerated than inmates who did not complete a program.

We requested SCI Pittsburgh to provide us with data regarding the reincarceration rate of inmates who had completed vocation education programs. SCI Pittsburgh did not maintain that data and recommended that we access the Department's website "inmate locator"¹⁶ to determine if any of the 19 inmates selected for review during our audit were reincarcerated into a state correctional institution. We found that none of the 19 inmates were reincarcerated into a state correctional institution as of November 1, 2013.

In summary, SCI Pittsburgh and the Department failed to collect, maintain and analyze data to determine whether vocational education programs that are financed with taxpayer money are effective to help inmates find employment and to reduce reincarceration rates.

Recommendations

1. SCI Pittsburgh and the Department should implement monitoring procedures to obtain and analyze employment statistics of inmates released from SCI Pittsburgh to determine if the vocational programs provided at SCI Pittsburgh improved the employment rates of former inmates who completed vocational training. This monitoring will provide the SCI and the Department with a tool to gauge whether the former inmates and the taxpaying public received a benefit from the resources expended to provide the programs at the SCI.
2. If analysis of employment statistics does not indicate that programs are successful, the Department should re-evaluate and improve the programs.

¹⁶ http://www.cor.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/department_of_corrections/4604, accessed Nov. 1, 2013

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

3. The Department should implement monitoring procedures to obtain and analyze reincarceration statistics of inmates released from the SCI to determine whether vocational programs provided at the SCI decreased reincarceration rates among former inmates who completed vocational training. This monitoring will provide the Department with a tool to gauge whether the former inmates and the taxpaying public received a benefit from the resources expended to provide the vocational programs at the SCI.
4. If analysis of reincarceration statistics does not indicate that programs are successful, the Department should re-evaluate and improve the programs.

**Management
Response**

Following receipt of this report, the Department of Corrections Director of Research and Statistics was consulted to assist in developing a response, as well as to assist in the development of a mechanism for collecting and a maintaining performance measuring instrument for the vocational programs at SCI-Pittsburgh and the Department of Corrections.

In reference to collecting follow up employment data, the Department's Research and Statistics Bureau has recently finalized an agreement with the Department of Labor and Industry to receive employment information from them on a regular basis. This agreement took more than a year to obtain and is exclusive to a very specific evaluation project that the Bureau is currently working on. The Director of Research and Statistics indicated that it may be possible to expand this agreement to include information relative to employment data as it pertains to ex-inmates who completed vocational programs.

While the request for this employment data may be initiated at the local institution, it is likely the data collection and analysis will be performed at the Bureau of Research and Statistic. As an agreement with another state agency will be required, specific dates of implementation cannot be established in this response.

Recommendation #2 notes the Department should re-evaluate and improve the programs should the data collection and analysis indicate that employment statistics do not improve employment. SCI-Pittsburgh and the Department of Corrections currently offers NCCER Certification, The National Center for Construction Education and Research. This is a nationally recognized certification agency and there is a standardized curriculum with all NCCER programs. Should the data not support

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

continuation of such program, another such recognized program will need to be sought. (This response will be consistent for Recommendation #4, in reference to recidivism.)

SCI-Pittsburgh will implement monitoring of re-incarceration rates for inmates released from the facility that have completed vocational programs. This monitoring will take place on an annual basis by our Education Department.

As a final note, in reference to the Department of Correction's efforts in reviewing the effectiveness of our vocational programming; last year the Department applied for a grant to partner with the Univ. of Cincinnati to evaluate our vocational programming department-wide. We unfortunately did not obtain the grant, but are looking for other funding opportunities to have our vocational programming evaluated. It is also ideal to have an external evaluator conduct the evaluation for credibility and objectivity. The Auditor General's Performance Audit, as well as this response, has been forwarded to The Department of Corrections Bureau of Research and Statistics.

**Auditor's
Conclusion**

We are pleased that SCI-Pittsburgh management agrees with our finding and recommendations and that the Department of Corrections is considering the expansion of a recently completed agreement with the Department of Labor and Industry to regularly receive employment information regarding former inmates. In addition, we are pleased that SCI-Pittsburgh will be implementing a process to monitor the re-incarceration rates of inmates who have completed the vocational programs, and that SCI-Pittsburgh is seeking independent analysis of the effectiveness of such programs, which we believe are critical in assisting inmates to secure suitable employment and to diminish reincarceration rates. During our next audit, we will evaluate whether our recommendations have been appropriately implemented.

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

**Audit Results
for
Objective Two**

*Community
Corrections
Center/Community
Contracted
Facility*

The objective

Objective two of our performance audit was to determine if programs provided by community corrections centers (CCC) and community contract facilities (CCF) improved residents' ability to find employment and to reduce reincarceration rates.

Relevant law, policies, and contracts

The CCCs and CCFs provide a transitional process during which residents are monitored while they pursue employment and educational opportunities. These facilities house inmates who have been released or who are scheduled to be released from a correctional institution. The CCCs are operated by the Department while the CCFs are operated by private vendors. Regardless of the operator, both the CCCs and the CCFs adhere to Department policies. The Department contracts with private contractors to provide specialized treatment services, including substance abuse programming and supervision services, in both types of facilities

A community corrections center is better known as a halfway house. Department inmates are eligible for placement into a center after having served at least nine months in a state prison, so long as they have complied with prison rules and have not received a major misconduct. The Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole also uses the centers and can parole an offender to a center rather than to the street if officials believe the parolee requires additional supervision while in the community.¹⁷

These centers also serve an important role in parole violations. There are times when parolees, for whatever reason, do not follow their parole plan. Violations can range from failing to report a change in address to their parole officer to committing a new crime. In the less serious case of an address change, rather than place the offender back into a state prison, officials have the option of placing the individual in a center for a period of time. This is known as half-way back. Rather than taking up expensive cell space housing such a violator, the center setting is more appropriate and allows the offender to get back on the right track.¹⁸

The Department has established the following policies pertaining to the CCC/CCF program¹⁹:

¹⁷ The Pennsylvania Probation, Parole and Corrections, Journal Volume 69, No.1, spring 2012, pg 5.

¹⁸ Ibid pg 6.

¹⁹ http://www.cor.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/doc_policies/20643 Department of Corrections, Inmate Reentry and Transition, policy 7.3.1.

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

- Policy 7.3.1 – provides policy and procedures to assist an inmate in his-her plans for release from Department custody. This policy requires each inmate to complete a reintegration plan within two weeks of arriving at a center.
- Policy 8.1.1 – provides housing and transitional services to residents of CCC/CCF until such time that a resident is released. Section 4, Referrals/Discharges further states:²⁰

Each case referred for Community Corrections placement will receive a thorough and fair evaluation by Bureau of Community Corrections staff. All referrals will be evaluated by the Bureau of Community Corrections Centralized Referral Unit. The Centralized Referral Unit will not discriminate based on sex, race, creed, national origin, political views, or disability in acceptance or rejection of referrals. The decision to approve or not approve will be based on public risk and programming needs of the offender are considered.

- Policy 8.1.1 Section 7 - Contract Facilities states:

The Department recognizes that it may be necessary to place residents having pre-release or parole status into community programs operated by private vendors.

Placement may be needed for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to the following:

- ✓ The need for additional community bed space;
- ✓ The need for specialized programming in the areas of substance abuse, sexual dysfunction, and/or MH/MR treatment; and
- ✓ The need for vocational/education evaluation and training.

The Bureau of Community Corrections is responsible for the 14 Department-operated CCCs and 40²¹ CCFs that are located in various counties in the commonwealth.

²⁰ Department of Corrections, Community Correction Centers, policy 8,1.1.

²¹ http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/about_us_our_mission/20857, accessed April 22, 2014.

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

We focused the scope of our work on evaluating the Department's monitoring of inmates or parolees placed at these facilities and its efforts to assist offenders to reintegrate back into society.

Scope and methodologies to meet our objective

The scope of this objective related to SCI Pittsburgh's inmates placed in three inmate residences from July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2013, unless indicated otherwise.

To satisfy this objective, we performed the following:

We reviewed the Department policies listed above that were relevant to Community Correction Centers (CCC) and Community Contract Facilities (CCF).

We reviewed the resident handbooks of each center. The handbooks describe the procedures the facility has in place to track residents and the programs each center offers to residents.

We interviewed the regional director of the Bureau of Community Corrections to obtain an understanding of the inmate placement process at the community centers.

We reviewed 30 resident files, 10 from one CCC and 10 from each of the two CCFs. All 30 residents were released from SCI Pittsburgh and placed in the residences between July 1, 2009, and June 30, 2013. Specifically, we reviewed resident's move reports to determine if the resident reoffended and was placed back in a Department correctional institution. We also examined other items from the residents' files such as:

- The resident arrival date at the facility;
- Residents' progress reports;
- Programs (ex: counseling, drug and alcohol counseling) the resident participated in during their stay at the center;
- Programs/sentence completion at the center; and
- Resident employment searches while staying at the facility.

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

We used the Department's *Inmate Locator* website²² to determine if any of the 30 inmates in our test group were reincarcerated in a state correctional institution as of November 1, 2013.

Finally, we contacted the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole (PBPP) to determine if any of our residents selected for review were reincarcerated after being released from either the CCC or one of the CCFs.

²² http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/inmate_information/7278/inmate_locator/513574, accessed November 1, 2013.

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

Finding 2

Community corrections centers and community contract facilities provided programs to assist their residents to reintegrate into society. However, neither SCI Pittsburgh nor the Department monitored residents to determine if the programs improved residents' ability to find employment or if the programs reduced the residents' rate of reincarceration once released.

Our audit found that the facilities maintained a record or file on each resident that contained documentation of the resident's conduct and performance evaluations that were completed by the facility during his or her stay at the facility. We found the facilities provided the 30 residents released from SCI Pittsburgh with behavioral and substance abuse programs²³ while they resided at the facility. We also found that the centers require residents to seek employment. At the time of our audit 20 of the 30 residents were employed and the six were actively seeking employment.

During interviews with Department officials it was explained to us that once a resident is released from a facility, the Department did not track the status of a resident and that no data was available supporting program effectiveness. The Department did not determine whether the programs provided by the CCCs and CCFs reduced reincarceration. The Department did not evaluate whether inmates released from the centers are more or less successful at obtaining employment or reintegrating into society than inmates released from directly from institutions.

Department officials attributed the post-release monitoring deficiencies on the following, as applicable to individual residents:

- The resident has served his maximum sentence and was free to leave the facility and was not required to report back to the Department.
- The resident was on probation or parole at the time of release and the Department did not maintain communications with the Board of Probation and Parole on the status of former inmates.

The Department did some monitoring of reincarceration rates. According to the Department, the individuals released to CCCs in 2008-2009 experienced a three year reincarceration rate of 53.3 percent, while inmates who were released directly from a state correctional institute to the street in 2008-2009 experienced a 44.0 percent reincarceration rate.²⁴

²³ Examples of the programs are Drug and Alcohol treatment programs, violence prevention and life skills.

²⁴ Recidivism Report 2013, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, page 28.

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

Furthermore, the three year overall recidivism rate for individuals released from the centers is 66.7 percent while the recidivism rate for inmates released directly to the street is 59.7 percent.²⁵ Based on these statistics, the Department has to question the cost effectiveness of placing released inmates in the community corrections residence.

According to the Department's *Inmate Locator* website,²⁶ none of the thirty (30) inmates in our test group that were released from the residences at various times during our audit period were reincarcerated as of November 1, 2013.

Finally, according to all three centers' handbooks,²⁷ residents staying at the centers are required to actively seek employment. We verified that 20 of the 30 residents were employed in restaurants or construction trades, and that 6 were actively seeking employment.

Of the four residents not seeking employment, one was on SSI,²⁸ one was waiting for a SSI determination, and two were several months away from serving out their entire sentence so they chose not to work but to stay confined to the facility until they were released.

We found that the Department did not monitor the employment status of the resident once the resident was released from the center. Therefore, the Department did not obtain information needed to determine whether the job training received by inmates while a resident at a center was effective. As a result, the Department does not know if the programs offered at the centers were effective in enabling the resident to find employment.

- Recommendations**
5. The Department should implement monitoring procedures to obtain and analyze employment statistics of residents released from the CCC/CCFs to determine if programs provided at CCC/CCFs improved their employment rates. This monitoring will provide the Department with a tool to gauge whether the residents and the taxpaying public received a benefit from the resources expended to provide the programs at the CCC/CCFs.

²⁵ Recidivism Report 2013, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, page 29.

²⁶ http://www.cor.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/department_of_corrections/4604, accessed Nov. 1, 2013

²⁷ Resident compliance with handbook requirements is required under Department Policy 8.1.1 section 5 c

²⁸ SSI stands for Supplemental Security Income. Social Security administers this program. Monthly benefits are provided to people with limited income and resources who are disabled, blind, or age 65 or older. Blind or disabled children may also receive SSI.

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

6. If analysis of employment statistics does not indicate that programs are successful, the Department should re-evaluate and improve the programs.
7. The Department should implement monitoring procedures to obtain and analyze reincarceration statistics of residents released from the CCC/CCFs to determine whether programs provided at CCC/CCFs decreased their reincarceration rates. This monitoring will provide the Department with a tool to gauge whether the residents and the taxpaying public received a benefit from the resources expended to provide the programs at the CCC/CCFs.
8. If analysis of reincarceration statistics does not indicate that programs are successful, the Department should re-evaluate and improve the programs.

**Management
Response**

In July 2013, the DOC (for the first time) initiated incentive based contracts with over 40 private community corrections contractors, otherwise known as CCFs. Contractors yearly per diem increases are based on two (2) factors: reduction of recidivism (combined with successful programs completion rates), and program audits. Recidivism rates are broken down by each center and each specific program or lot (group home, mental health, inpatient drug and alcohol, dually diagnosed, specialized, parole violators and veterans).

During the first audit year, 9 out of the 40 contractors reduced recidivism above and beyond the baseline and received their per diem increase. One of the 40 contractors passed all of their performance audits. No contractors were put on "warning status" (which permits the DOC/BCC to terminate the contract if overall performance is poor) based on DOC/Parole audits which indicated that the contractors have the ability to improve in the deficient areas with DOC and Parole's support. The overall recidivism rates of our contractors went down 2.1 percentage points from the baseline during the first marking period. It is clear to the DOC that the contractors are paying attention to the incentives and the strategy is working.

It should be noted the same grading standards are utilized to rate our 13 state centers, otherwise known as CCCs. The overall recidivism rated for the state centers went down .04 percentage points.

The DOC and Parole continues to jointly evaluate and work with each site to improve programs and reduce recidivism rates throughout the

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

Commonwealth. The incentive based contracts are attached to this email for your review along with the “change order” to the contracts.

With the discontinuation of pre-release in Pennsylvania in July 2012, due to the passing of ACT 122, 87% of the 4200 daily offenders in Community Corrections are now considered under the jurisdiction of Parole (compared to 50% before the ACT was passed). Parole tracks the employment rates of its 40,000 offenders and provides the DOC/BCC overall employment numbers on a yearly basis. The employment rates for Parolees during fiscal year 2013-14 were 60%. Parole separately tracks recidivism which is calculated slightly different from the DOC’s.

The DOC’s Planning and Research Division recently finalized an agreement with the Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) to receive employment information on certain released offenders by tracking them through their social security numbers. This MOU would tell us what job the individual is working during the calendar year, their quarterly earnings, and the type of industry. Planning and Research indicates they may be able to extend this current MOU to cover employment rates in Community Corrections and will pursue this track. If approved, the tracking of employment rates versus recidivism can be monitored and reported.

Currently no significant research exists to indicate employment rates of offenders have a direct correlation to the reduction of recidivism, although most correctional professionals believe it helps an individual succeed and become a more productive member of society.

Overall, the DOC and Parole continue to evaluate and improve our programs. These assessments are based on “what works” research throughout the United States and detailed audits tools developed by the BCC and Parole. Monthly audits are conducted at every community correction center by various staff from DOC and Parole throughout each calendar year.

During a recent conference in California, the University of Cincinnati (considered one of the top research universities regarding corrections in the United States) recognized two state’s community corrections systems for performing program audits above and beyond the national standard. The two states were Kansas and Pennsylvania. Of course we are very proud of this recognition.

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

**Auditor's
Conclusion**

We are pleased that SCI-Pittsburgh management agrees with our finding and recommendations and that the Department of Corrections is considering an expansion of a recently completed agreement with the Department of Labor and Industry to regularly receive employment information that may enable employment rates of Community Center residents to be tracked. We are also pleased that Department of Corrections' management indicated that they have implemented procedures related to tracking employment and recidivism. Because these revised procedures were implemented after the time period subject to audit for this objective, during our next audit we will evaluate whether the revised procedures and our recommendations were appropriately implemented.

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

**Status of Prior
Audit**

The prior audit report of SCI Pittsburgh covered the period July 1, 2007 through June 19, 2009, and contained eleven findings. However, only two of the findings contained recommendations. A summary of the two findings, their accompanying recommendations, and the status of SCI Pittsburgh's implementation of the recommendations is presented below.

Scope and methodologies of our audit work

To determine the status of the implementation of the recommendations made during the prior audits, we held discussions and made inquiries with appropriate institution personnel and performed tests as part of, or in conjunction with the current audit.

Prior Finding 1 SCI Pittsburgh did not comply with Department of Corrections' policies and did not develop practices to manage its automotive fleet effectively at the lowest reasonable cost. (Resolved)

During our prior audit of automotive fleet operations at SCI Pittsburgh, we found the following deficiencies:

- Fuel and oil receipts were, at times, illegible, missing, or did not list the gas pump meter reading and other information.
- SCI Pittsburgh did not submit the required monthly vehicle activity summary report for the months of July 2007 through February 2009.
- Our testing of records for the 10 employees with the highest personal mileage reimbursement found that these employees received a total \$6,180 for 37 trips during the fiscal year ended June 30, 2009. We found that the request form was not completed for 30 of the 37 of the trips, or 83 percent. In addition, a total of \$2,465 in personal mileage was paid for 16 of the 37 trips even though a state vehicle was available.

We recommended that SCI Pittsburgh management:

- Enforce existing policies to ensure that the required forms are being completed, submitted, and approved to support decision-making.
- Ensure that all travel is cost effective in a state vehicle by maximizing the effective use of these vehicles and minimizing any additional travel costs.

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

In response to our recommendations, Department of Corrections' management stated on February 10, 2012, that:

SCI Pittsburgh management now complies with the Department of Correction's policies requiring the proper forms to be completed and submitted so that the decision makers can approve the lowest cost travel alternative. The institution has also hired additional automotive shop staff and implemented controls for dispensing fuel and documenting mileage and fuel receipts. The proper forms are provided to the Department's automotive officer.

Status as of this audit: Through interviews, observations, and review of automotive fleet records, we determined the following:

Employees were trained on the Department's travel policy at orientation and the policy is available on-line to every employee at SCI Pittsburgh. The monthly automotive reports for each state vehicle were filled out each time the vehicle was used and the information was transferred to the vehicle summary report. The vehicle activity summary reports were sent to Harrisburg by the automotive officer by the tenth of each month.

Our review of 37 vehicle request forms for the time period January 1, 2013 to June 30, 2013, found that the forms were reviewed and approved by institution management. All forms were properly completed and approved by the deputy at SCI Pittsburgh.

Based upon the actions taken by SCI Pittsburgh, we concluded that SCI Pittsburgh implemented our recommendations.

Prior Finding 9

SCI Pittsburgh used a maintenance work order system whereby employees could enter electronic approvals of department heads without the knowledge of those department heads; SCI Pittsburgh also did not monitor open work orders. (Partially Resolved)

Our prior audit of the work orders identified the following issues:

- Fifty work orders were completed the same day as requested by us.
- Three work orders were actually completed prior to our review and appeared to be left open due to a clerical error.
- Twenty-one work orders were closed with mostly the same completion dates after we inquired about the status. Ten of these projects had a completion date of April 29, 2009.

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

- Only three work orders did not have a completion date.

We recommended that SCI Pittsburgh management:

- Enforce existing policies to ensure that all work order requests are approved by the appropriate department head.
- Consistently monitor open work orders to ensure timely completion.

In response to our recommendations, Department of Corrections' management stated on February 10, 2012, that:

The current system is designed around the paper DC-437 (4part snap set). This is due to the fact that many of the line staff [do] not have instant access to a computer, and they are the primary starting point for a work request. This person "should" fill out a DC-437 and have his/her supervisor sign it and then give it to a person designated to enter the electronic version. The paper copy is to be filed or logged at the submission location for easy follow up as indicated in DOC policy 10-02-01 Section 12 Paragraph B. The policy also mentions that no signature is required for an electronic work request (Paragraph A). The rationale for the decision NOT to do routing as in the electronic APR system is that the nature of a Maintenance Request prohibits the possibility of the request languishing in someone's electronic "In Box" if they are "out of office".

Additionally all work orders are evaluated by maintenance supervisors to determine if they are viable prior to prioritizing and assigning to the maintenance staff for completion.

It should also be noted that during the time frame of the audit, the facility was in the process of reopening after being mothballed for two and a half years.

Status as of this audit: Through interviews, observations, and review of work orders, we determined the following:

The facility maintenance manager provided us with an ad hoc work order search for the period January 3, 2013 through June 25, 2013. The work order search is a summary of all work orders entered into the system at the institution. For our period of review, there were 138 work orders entered into the system.

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

Our review of 10 completed work orders showed a completion date of either September 17 or 18 of 2013. We found that all 10 work orders were properly requested by the designated department at SCI Pittsburgh and were properly approved by either the major or deputy. Once approved all 10 work orders were properly assigned to tradesman at the institution.

We did find one open work order on the ad hoc work order search form that was properly explained, signed and dated by the tradesman as to why this work order was still open. SCI Pittsburgh management stated that the work order was required to be turned into a project do to the scope of the repair required to be performed.

We noted that management will reviewed open work orders every four to eight weeks. The date of the review was the date used to show when the work order it was completed. We found this procedure left the SCI Pittsburgh unable to determine the length of time work orders were actually opened.

Based on the information we reviewed, we determined that SCI Pittsburgh has made improvements to the monitoring of the open work orders. Work orders are now properly approved and assigned to the appropriate tradesman to complete the work order. Once completed work orders were properly closed by the institution. However, since a review of open work orders is not completed until four to six weeks, we again recommend that management review open work orders every other week to prevent incomplete repairs, unnecessary equipment failure, as well as possible injury to staff and inmates.

Our follow-up on the previous audit indicated that SCI-Pittsburgh management reviews the status of open work orders every four to six weeks. SCI-Pittsburgh will review the status of open work orders every other week, or sooner, as recommended in our review.

**State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Department of Corrections**

**Audit Report
Distribution
List**

The Honorable Tom W. Wolf
Governor

The Honorable Christopher B. Craig
Acting State Treasurer
Pennsylvania Treasury Department

The Honorable John E. Wetzel
Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Corrections

John Kaschak
Director of Audits
Office of Comptroller Operations
Office of the Budget

State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh
Mark V. Capozza
Superintendent

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at www.PaAuditor.gov. Media questions about the report can be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 231 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: news@auditor.gen.state.pa.us.