

Report to the Jail Oversight Board Pursuant to Allegheny County Code Chapter Section 205-30 for the Month of February 2022

Allegheny County Jail

The Allegheny County Jail (ACJ) is a short-term holding facility for the newly arrested and those held by a judge awaiting trial or sentencing. It also serves individuals sentenced by a judge to a short (less than two years) term. The mission of the Bureau of Corrections is to increase public safety in Allegheny County by providing care, custody and control of persons incarcerated, and to reduce recidivism through programs that help persons reenter and succeed in society.

Built in 1995, the facility is a high-rise direct supervision jail located in downtown Pittsburgh. Incarcerated individuals are housed at the facility, with a capacity of 3,156 individuals, or at one of three alternative housing facilities which, together, can hold an additional 200+ individuals. The population of the main facility averages between 1,500 and 1,600 persons currently.

When law enforcement agencies bring an individual to the Allegheny County Jail, they are first searched for contraband and medically cleared by a qualified healthcare professional to determine provision of care prior to placement in the facility. Next, the individual is booked, identified and interviewed by Pre-Trial services. Pre-Trial services make a recommendation to the judge for bail or detention. Pre-arraignment hearings take place with a judge via video conference where determination is made for bail or confinement. If bail is recommended, they are then taken to the processing center where they are allowed to make phone calls and held until bond is paid. If the individual is to be confined to the jail, they are medically evaluated and provided a shower and clothing. Incarcerated individuals are then sent to a classification pod for further assessment. Based on classification status, they are transferred to a maximum, medium or minimum-security housing unit.

The Allegheny County Jail provides a variety of services for incarcerated individuals including healthcare, mental health, addiction recovery, education, re-entry, Foundation of HOPE, and alternative housing. The facility also has a Discharge and Release Center where individuals are provided with bus passes, phone calls, medication, clothing, referrals and resources upon their release.

The Allegheny County Jail is accredited by the American Correctional Association (ACA). It is one of three ACA-accredited Adult Local Correctional Facilities in Pennsylvania and a prestigious achievement. In the ACA's review of the jail in 2018, the facility met 100 percent of the 62 mandatory standards and 98.6 percent of the 323 non-mandatory standards.

2021 Referendum

In May 2021, voters in Allegheny County approved a referendum to end the use of solitary confinement at the Allegheny County Jail. The referendum also prohibited use of a restraint chair, chemical agents, or leg shackles on any person in the custody of the facility.

The resulting chapter of the Administrative Code also required a monthly report to be provided to the Jail Oversight Board and posted on the jail's website. The chapter requires the reporting of 1) the dates and reasons for any lockdown of the jail, or any section of the jail; 2) the number of times any person has been subjected to temporary solitary confinement with the duration and reason for each confinement, as well as the number of instances of the same person being held in solitary confinement more than once in the calendar month; and, 3) the age, sex, gender identity, race and ethnicity of each person held in solitary confinement.

Accordingly, the attached report is separated into three sections: Pod Lockdown, Intake Segregation and Pod Segregation.

Pod Lockdown Section: This portion of the report identifies locations, dates and reasons for any lockdown of the jail, or any section of the jail, during the previous month. During a lockdown, individuals might not be provided with four or more hours of out-of-cell time.

Intake Segregation Section: This portion of the report identifies the number of times any person was held in the intake section of the jail, segregated alone in a cell for 20 hours or more in any 24-hour period during the previous month, including duration, age, gender, race and ethnicity.

Pod Segregation Section: This portion of the report identifies the number of days any person was housed alone in and confined to a cell for more than 20 hours a day during the previous month, including the number of episodes for the individual, duration (days) of each episode, reason, age, gender, race and ethnicity. Each episode is considered a group of consecutive days.

Methodology

The report relies on multiple records and sources to track housing of incarcerated individuals. This process begins during the intake process and follows the individual through all housing locations while committed to the facility.

When necessary and if available, demographic information may be obtained from the Department of Human Services' data warehouse which has demographic data sourced from multiple human services programs, healthcare, Court, and jail data.

Terminology

For reading ease, terminology used in this report is defined below.

Age: If included in the Intake Segregation Section, the age of the individual is their age as recorded at the beginning of the intake process. If included in the Pod Segregation Section, the age of the individual is as recorded at the time of their commitment.

Duration: The number of days an individual is in segregated housing during the month in question.

Episode: An episode is defined as any day or group of consecutive days when an individual is in segregated housing. A person is deemed to be in segregated housing for a day if they are confined to a cell alone in a segregated housing unit for an aggregate of at least 20 hours within the day.

Ethnicity: The ethnicity of the individual.

Gender Identity: The self-reported sex of the individual.

Jail Intake: Jail intake is where individuals are housed in cells until they complete certain processes including identification, pre-trial services assessment, health and mental health screenings, and preliminary arraignment. Individuals who are confined to and alone in a cell in intake for more than 20 hours in a day are reported in the Intake Segregation Section of the report.

Race: The race of the individual.

Reason: Exceptions to the use of solitary confinement are provided for the following reasons:

Assessment: A person may be held in solitary confinement for a period of 24 hours, but no longer than necessary to determine whether that person should be isolated from other detainees and/or inmates for medical reasons or in order to ensure the safety of other detainees or inmates. If so determined, arrangements will be made to house that person in a manner that protects them and other inmates while allowing them to spend four (4) hours or more outside their cell each day.

Medical: A person has received a personal and comprehensive medical and mental health examination conducted by licensed professionals who have certified that the person's confinement is necessary for medical reasons or to ensure the safety of others.

Requested Protective Custody: Any person who requests separation from other detainees or inmates because that person fears for their safety may be placed in short-term solitary confinement for a period not to exceed 72 hours by signing a voluntary consent form.

Segregated Housing: After an individual is committed to the jail by a judge, they are then sent to a classification pod for further assessment before being transferred to a maximum-, medium- or minimum-security pod. Individuals may be housed on a segregated housing pod for a variety of reasons. If an incarcerated individual is housed on a segregated housing pod and confined to a cell alone for a minimum of 20 hours on a given day at least once during the prior month, those instances are reported in the Pod Segregation Section of the report.

Sex: The biological and physiological characteristics of the individual.

Executive Summary

The Allegheny County Jail is in compliance with the referendum and Chapter 205.

Pod Lockdown Report: The jail continued to be in full lockdown from February 1 through February 28, 2022, during which time all incarcerated individuals experienced limited time out-of-cell. The modified lockdown was a heightened mitigation measure used in the facility to limit the spread of COVID in the facility, particularly in light of the highly contagious and easily transmissible Omicron variant.

On February 28, 2022, there were just two positive cases of COVID in the facility out of a population of 1,564. The cases were down significantly from a high of 256 in January and mirror what is being seen in the community. As of the end of February, one unit remained on isolation status with no units on quarantine status. There are no positive COVID cases in employees, but three individuals were in quarantine.

The modified out-of-cell time allows for greater physical distancing between incarcerated individuals. Accordingly, general population housing units are limited to having 15 incarcerated individuals and two (2) incarcerated individual workers out at any given time. On quarantine units, out-of-cell time is limited to eight (8) incarcerated individuals and two incarcerated individual workers out at any given time. Mask wearing continues to be mandatory in the facility.

With the decrease in cases, the jail has revised its testing policy and is working to determine when operations at the facility may return to normal and is preparing to make operational changes when that occurs.

Intake Segregation Report: There were no instances of persons in Jail Intake being isolated in a cell alone for more than 20 hours during the month of February.

Pod Segregation Report: As noted in the Pod Lockdown Report section, the jail was in a facility-wide lockdown during the month of February. As a result, all incarcerated individuals experienced limited time out of cell.

Pod Lockdown Section

Pod	Date	Reason
All	02/01/2022-02/28/2022	Medical

Intake Segregation Section

None

Pod Segregation Section

No report due to facility-wide lockdown.