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2019 Multnomah County Corrections Grand Jury report released

Today, Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill announced the release of the 2019 Multnomah County Corrections Grand Jury report.

“Most correctional institutions across the country are changing the way they operate to ensure the needs of those in custody are fully addressed while simultaneously ensuring public safety,” said Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill. “Locally, Multnomah County Sheriff Mike Reese and his leadership team must be recognized for their proactive, fair and balanced approach to criminal justice. Our community should be proud of the work that is already underway that will, with proper funding and resources, divert people with mental illness away from jail and ensure that community-based resources are provided to them in the alternative and in an immediate fashion.”

“[J]ail in Multnomah County should be more than locking up people and keeping them out of sight; rather, it should be an opportunity for intervention so that when these [individuals] are released back into our community, they become contributing and responsible members,” the 2019 Corrections Grand Jury report states.

A full copy of the grand jury report, in compliance with ORS 132.440, can be obtained by clicking [here](#).

This year’s Corrections Grand Jury convened over a four week period to collect information and to prepare a report on the condition and management of the four correctional facilities located in Multnomah County.

The 2019 Corrections Grand Jury made key findings regarding mental health, capacity concerns, emergency population releases, pre-trial diversion programs, the experiences for adults in custody, communication, and MCSO employment.

“[T]he overall jail population is composed of people experiencing increasingly severe mental health challenges than ever before,” the 2019 Corrections Grand Jury report states. “...[W]ith the de-institutionalization of mental health facilities, jails have become the default option for law enforcement to manage those with mental health challenges who have law enforcement contact. There is consensus among all witnesses that an effective solution is for properly funded upstream resources such as long-term and short-term housing, access to mental health care and [the] expansion of community addiction services.”

The 2019 Corrections Grand Jury recommends that the Multnomah County Board of County Commissioners “aggressively” pursue funding sources for both corrections and upstream services.

The 2019 Corrections Grand Jury made a total of seven recommendations to the Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office. The first three are deemed “high priority” and include (1) filling currently funded vacancies within the Corrections Division of the Sheriff’s Office; (2) funding Close Street Supervision to a target ratio of 25 participants to one deputy; (3) opening two “cohort” dorms.

Recommendations four, five and six are classified as “medium priority” and include (4) reducing the occurrences of emergency population releases; (5) evaluating the *Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD®)* program for enhancement or elimination; (6) providing adults in custody with programming options and information at the time of classification.

The final recommendation, classified as “low priority,” is (7) to evaluate the equity of visitation access of the Multnomah County Inverness Jail.

The Multnomah County District Attorney’s Office recognizes the seven grand jurors for their dedicated efforts conducting this report. Furthermore, we recognize Multnomah County Senior Deputy District Attorney Tom Cleary and Multnomah County Deputy District Attorney Jeffrey Lowe for convening and organizing this grand jury.

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