

Cumberland County Jail Board of Visitors Annual Report



Prepared by the Cumberland County Jail Board of Visitors
Submitted March 2026

Purpose and Authority of the Board of Visitors

The Cumberland County Jail Board of Visitors (JBOV) serves as an independent civilian oversight body established pursuant to Title 30-A §1651 of the Maine Revised Statutes. The Board is charged with inspecting the correctional facility, observing conditions of confinement, and making recommendations to the Sheriff and County Commissioners regarding the care, custody, and treatment of individuals held at the facility.

Members of the Board are appointed by the Sheriff and serve as community representatives responsible for promoting transparency, accountability, and humane treatment within the county correctional system.

The Board's responsibilities include:

- Conducting inspections of the jail facility
- Observing conditions affecting incarcerated individuals
- Meeting with facility leadership and staff
- Receiving information related to operations and inmate welfare
- Making recommendations intended to improve safety, health, and operational practices within the facility

The Board operates independently of the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office and provides an annual report summarizing its observations and recommendations.

Board Membership

During the 2025 reporting period, the Cumberland County Jail Board of Visitors consisted of the following members:

Colleen Hilton, Chair

Retired healthcare executive and former Mayor of Westbrook.

Garrett Stewart, Member

Maintenance worker with the South Portland School Department and labor advocate.

William Baker, Member

Retired law enforcement officer and attorney with extensive experience in public safety.

Amanda Place, Member

Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor and Program Director for residential services at Recovery Connections of Maine.

Karen White, Member

Retired educator and former member of the Maine Community College System education department.

Hailey Virusso, Member

Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Director of Preble Street's Anti-Trafficking Services.

Kiley Wilkens-O'Brien, Member

Behavioral health strategist specializing in the intersection of mental health and the criminal justice system and serving as the Board's mental health-focused member.

The Board represents a diverse range of professional and lived experiences, including public safety, behavioral health, education, recovery services, and community advocacy.

Board Activities and Facility Inspections

During the 2025 reporting year, the Board conducted multiple meetings and facility visits in accordance with its statutory oversight responsibilities.

Formal Board meetings were held on:

- February 26, 2025
- May 14, 2025
- November 19, 2025

During these meetings, the Board reviewed operational updates provided by facility leadership and discussed issues related to inmate welfare, facility operations, and ongoing initiatives within the jail. Board members also conducted facility tours and inspections during the year. These visits included observations of housing units, program spaces, medical areas, and other operational sections of the jail. Members had the opportunity to observe day-to-day operations and speak with staff regarding facility procedures and programming.

The Jail Administrator and Sheriff have indicated that Board members are welcome to conduct additional visits outside scheduled meetings when operationally feasible.

Facility Conditions and Operations

The Cumberland County Jail is the largest county correctional facility in Maine and houses individuals detained under county jurisdiction as well as federal detainees under agreements with the United States Marshals Service and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

During facility visits conducted in 2025, Board members observed that housing areas and common spaces appeared orderly and maintained in a generally clean condition. Staff interactions with incarcerated individuals appeared professional during observed interactions.

The Board also received information regarding the facility's continued accreditation through the American Correctional Association (ACA) and compliance with National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCCHC) standards, as well as certification under the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA).

In October 2025, the facility underwent an ACA reaccreditation audit evaluating compliance with correctional operational standards. Our ACA Reaccreditation score was 99%. The Board was informed that the facility had achieved the audit process. The Board understands that these audits include review of documentation related to supervision practices, intake screening procedures, and suicide prevention protocols.

While accreditation reviews provide an important external measure of operational standards, the Board considers its role to be complementary to these processes by providing ongoing community oversight of facility conditions and inmate welfare.

Access to Medical and Mental Health Care

Access to medical and mental health services remains a central component of safe and humane correctional operations. During the 2025 reporting period, the Board received information regarding the structure and staffing of medical and behavioral health services within the Cumberland County Jail.

Medical services at the facility are provided through a contracted healthcare provider responsible for primary medical care, nursing services, mental health counseling, and medication management. According to information provided to the Board, the healthcare team includes a Medical Director, Director of Nursing, mental health clinicians, a psychiatric nurse practitioner, case managers, and supporting nursing staff. The Board was informed that psychiatric consultation services are also available when needed.

The Board reviewed information indicating that all individuals admitted to the facility receive an initial intake health screening, which includes evaluation for medical conditions, substance use, and suicide risk. Facility policy also requires follow-up health assessments and mental health evaluations when clinically indicated.

During the reporting period, the facility reported continuing implementation of medication-assisted treatment (MAT) services for individuals experiencing opioid use disorder. At the time of this report, approximately 88 incarcerated individuals were receiving MAT services, reflecting the facility's ongoing effort to address substance use disorders within the jail population.

The Board also received information regarding efforts by medical and correctional staff to reduce critical incidents within the Special Housing Unit. Staff reported implementing additional clinical engagement strategies and behavioral interventions designed to reduce situations involving use of force or emergency response.

While the Board recognizes the significant complexity involved in providing healthcare services within a correctional setting, members will continue monitoring access to medical and behavioral health services, including staffing levels, wait times for care, and coordination with community providers upon release.

Programs, Education, and Reentry Services

The Board received information regarding a range of programs and services intended to support individuals during incarceration and assist with successful reintegration into the community. The Board was informed that many of these programs had been reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic due to staffing limitations and public health restrictions, but have since resumed as staffing levels improve.

Staff coordinates programming, including:

- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)
- Narcotics Anonymous (NA)
- Religious services
- Educational programming
- Reentry planning services

The facility also operates a Re-Entry and Reintegration team that works with incarcerated individuals to prepare for release by coordinating housing referrals, treatment connections, and other support services. These services are particularly important for individuals with substance use disorders or behavioral health needs.

The Board received information about federally funded initiatives supporting reentry services at the jail, including the Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program (COSSAP), which focuses on screening incarcerated individuals for substance use disorders and connecting them to treatment and peer support services prior to release. Through this initiative, individuals remaining in custody for more than seven days may receive treatment initiation, case management, and referral to community-based providers. The program also includes peer navigator services intended to help individuals maintain connections to recovery resources following release.

The Board understands that strong coordination between correctional institutions and community-based service providers plays a critical role in reducing recidivism and improving public safety. Members will continue monitoring the availability and accessibility of these programs during future reporting periods.

Federal Detainees and Access to Legal Services

In addition to individuals held under county jurisdiction, the Cumberland County Jail houses individuals detained under federal authority through agreements with federal agencies. During the 2025 reporting period, the facility reported housing an average of over 100 federal detainees, including individuals held on behalf of the United States Marshals Service and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The county receives approximately \$150 per detainee per day for housing federal detainees.

The Board received information indicating that individuals held under federal immigration authority have access to legal orientation and consultation services through the Immigrant Legal

Advocacy Project (ILAP), a Maine-based nonprofit organization that provides immigration legal assistance and education. These services are intended to help detainees understand immigration court procedures and their legal rights while in custody.

The Board recognizes that individuals held under federal immigration authority may face unique legal and procedural challenges. Members will continue to monitor access to legal information and services for these individuals in order to ensure that detainees are able to communicate with legal counsel and access available legal resources while housed at the facility.

Force and Safety Practices

The Board reviewed information provided by the facility regarding force incidents occurring during the 2025 reporting period. Force within correctional facilities may occur when staff must respond to assaultive behavior, prevent harm to individuals, maintain order, or ensure compliance with lawful directives.

According to information provided to the Board, the facility documented 116 force incidents during the reporting period. Of the 116 incidents, 93 were use of force, 9 were show of force, and 14 were a combination of use and show of force. These incidents were categorized by the facility into several types, including responses to assaultive behavior by incarcerated individuals, incidents involving non-compliance with staff directives, and situations requiring physical intervention to maintain safety.

The Board understands that force incidents are subject to internal review processes, which may include incident reports, supervisory review, and video documentation when available. Facility leadership reported that the purpose of these reviews is to ensure that staff actions remain consistent with established policy and training standards.

Members of the Board recognize that correctional environments present complex safety challenges for both staff and incarcerated individuals. The Board will continue monitoring force data and related review processes in order to better understand trends over time and to ensure that force is used only when necessary and in accordance with established standards.

Deaths in Custody

During the 2025 reporting period, the facility reported one death in custody. According to information provided to the Board, the death was determined to be due to natural causes.

The Board reviewed the results of an operational mortality review conducted following the incident. The review examined compliance with several mandatory operational standards governing inmate supervision, intake procedures, documentation practices, and emergency response protocols.

The mortality review determined that the facility was compliant with the majority of applicable standards, including required inmate supervision intervals, intake screening procedures, and documentation practices related to facility logs and staff post assignments.

The review identified one area of non-compliance involving correctional staff Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certification, as several staff members had lapsed certifications at the time of the incident. The facility reported that corrective action was taken following the review, and all required staff CPR certifications have since been brought into compliance.

The Board recognizes that deaths in custody require careful review and transparency. Members will continue to monitor mortality review findings and corrective actions in order to support ongoing improvements in emergency response preparedness and staff training.

Financial Transparency and Commissary Oversight

The Board reviewed information related to commissary operations and related financial activity during the reporting period. Commissary services provide incarcerated individuals with the opportunity to purchase approved personal items. The Board reviewed commissary pricing lists provided by the facility in order to better understand the cost of commonly purchased items. These lists included a range of hygiene products, snack foods, and personal items available for purchase by incarcerated individuals.

The Board also reviewed documentation indicating that commissary operations during the reporting period included a total operating budget of approximately \$571,324, with year-to-date expenses reported at approximately \$154,782 at the time financial information was provided to the Board. Revenue generated through commissary purchases exceeded expenses during this period.

The Board understands that commissary revenue may be used to support services or programming that benefit incarcerated individuals. Members will continue reviewing financial information related to commissary operations and associated expenditures in order to promote transparency and ensure that funds are used in ways that support the well-being of individuals housed at the facility.

Board Observations and Areas for Continued Monitoring

During the 2025 reporting period, the Board of Visitors observed a facility that appeared generally orderly and professionally operated during scheduled visits and meetings with facility leadership. Members observed respectful interactions between staff and incarcerated individuals during tours and noted ongoing efforts by the facility to maintain programming and treatment services despite staffing challenges experienced in recent years.

The Board recognizes the significant operational complexity involved in managing a large correctional facility serving a diverse population of individuals with varying medical, behavioral health, and social service needs. Cumberland County Jail continues to house individuals awaiting trial, those serving short sentences, and individuals detained under federal authority. This diversity of population requires coordination across security, medical, mental health, and reentry services.

The Board also recognizes the continued efforts of facility leadership to rebuild staffing levels following workforce shortages experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Information provided to the Board indicates that the facility has increased recruitment and training efforts, including graduating new correctional officers through the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. Members understand that integrating new staff into the correctional workforce requires continued attention to training, mentorship, and professional development in order to support long-term retention and workplace safety.

Members also note the increasing importance of behavioral health services within correctional environments. The Board will continue monitoring access to mental health services, medication-assisted treatment, and reentry coordination, particularly for individuals experiencing substance use disorders or significant behavioral health needs.

The Board recognizes that the jail facility itself is aging and that certain operational improvements, including surveillance technology upgrades and infrastructure improvements, may be necessary in the coming years to maintain safety and operational efficiency.

Information Requested by the Board

In preparing this report, the Board of Visitors requested information from the Cumberland County Jail regarding several operational areas relevant to its statutory oversight responsibilities.

Information reviewed by the Board for this report included:

- Use-of-force incident data for the reporting period
- Mortality review findings related to a death in custody
- Medical and mental health service structure
- Commissary financial information and pricing lists
- Staffing and training information related to correctional officer certification

The Board appreciates the cooperation of facility leadership and staff in providing information that allowed members to better understand facility operations and oversight issues during the reporting period. The Board anticipates continuing to work collaboratively with the Sheriff's Office and jail administration in order to ensure that information relevant to the Board's statutory responsibilities is available to support future annual reporting and oversight activities.

Board Recommendations

Based on information reviewed and observations made during the reporting period, the Board of Visitors offers the following recommendations for continued attention by facility leadership and county officials.

1. Continued Investment in Behavioral Health Services

The Board recommends continued investment in mental health and substance use treatment services within the facility. Correctional institutions increasingly serve individuals experiencing complex behavioral health needs, and adequate clinical staffing and treatment resources are essential for maintaining safety and supporting successful reentry into the community.

2. Strengthening Reentry Coordination

The Board supports continued efforts to strengthen reentry coordination for individuals leaving the facility, particularly those with housing instability, substance use disorders, or mental health needs. Partnerships with community providers remain an important component of reducing recidivism and improving post-release outcomes.

3. Workforce Training and Retention

The Board encourages continued investment in training and support for newly hired correctional staff. As the facility continues rebuilding its workforce, mentorship, professional development, and training related to communication, de-escalation, and cultural awareness may assist in supporting staff retention and maintaining a safe facility environment.

4. Technology and Security Infrastructure

The Board recommends continued evaluation of facility security infrastructure, including surveillance systems and perimeter monitoring. Members understand that updated camera systems and related technology may improve safety for both staff and incarcerated individuals.

5. Ongoing Monitoring of Medical and Emergency Preparedness

The Board recommends continued monitoring of medical and emergency preparedness protocols, including ensuring that staff certifications for life-saving interventions such as CPR remain current and that training compliance is regularly reviewed.

Response from Jail Administration

The Board of Visitors provided its recommendations to the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office and jail administration. Facility leadership reviewed these recommendations and provided responses outlining current efforts and future plans related to the areas identified by the Board.

The Board appreciates the willingness of facility leadership to engage in constructive dialogue on operational improvements and looks forward to continued collaboration to support safe and humane correctional operations within Cumberland County.