

PENNSYLVANIA PRISON SOCIETY

To: Mike Resnick, Commissioner
Carlton Williams, Managing Director
From: Claire Shubik-Richards, Pennsylvania Prison Society Executive Director
Noah Barth, Pennsylvania Prison Society Prison Monitoring Director
Regarding: RCF Walkthrough, June 16, 2026
Date: September 3, 2026

This memorandum summarizes the Prison Society's walkthrough of the Riverside Correctional Facility (RCF) on June 16, 2026.

This walkthrough showed notable improvements in conditions, including:

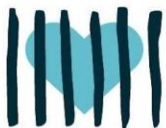
- Staff supervision,
- Access to the law library,
- Commissary,
- Access to phone calls,
- Distribution of inmate handbooks,
- Pest control,
- Access to laundry; and
- Sense of safety.

A major innovation at the Philadelphia Department of Prisons (PDP) has been the distribution of electronic tablets to everyone in general population. This has improved access to phone calls, access to the inmate handbook, and has other benefits. As discussed later in this memo, while tablets are a real improvement, they also have deficiencies in terms of cost and maintenance.

Along with some of the issues with the tablets, we observed and/or people reported issues including:

- Inadequate food,
- Inadequate access to counseling staff,
- New limitations on family visits; and
- Problems getting basic hygiene items like soap and toilet paper.

Most of these findings are consistent with the federally appointed court monitor's reports, published on November 4, 2022, March 3, 2023, October 12, 2023, March 29, 2024, October 1, 2024, March 31, 2025, September 30, 2025, and March 31, 2026.ⁱ



230 S. Broad Street, Suite 605
Philadelphia, PA 19102
p 215-564-4775 f 215-564-1830

[PRISONSCOCIETY.ORG](https://prisonsociety.org)

Background

The Pennsylvania Prison Society serves as Pennsylvania’s independent prison monitor. The Prison Society assists people in custody resolving issues related to their health, safety, and dignity.

On June 16, 2026, Prison Monitoring Director Noah Barth, Regional Manager Dzemila Bilanovic, and Prison Society volunteer Andrea Striepen conducted a walkthrough of RCF. They were escorted by Philadelphia Department of Prisons (PDP) Commissioner Resnick and members of his senior administration.ⁱⁱ

This is the Prison Society’s 19th walkthrough of a PDP facility since June 2021, and our fifth walkthrough of RCF. We previously conducted walkthroughs of RCF in September 2021, March 2022, May 2023, and December 2024. When we asked the same question on multiple walkthroughs, we have included answers over time.

This walkthrough included us going onto three general population housing units where we conducted structured interviews with 49 incarcerated men. All interviews were voluntary, anonymous, and interviewees were randomly selected. The interviews were conducted either one-on-one or in small groups in the housing units’ open space. Two of the units we visited house people on Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorders.

Unit	Classification	Number of interviewees
B	Low / medium security	15
F	Maximum security MAT	14
H	Low / medium security MAT	20
TOTAL		49

The purpose of these walkthroughs is to identify commonly experienced issues inside of the jail. The intention is not to identify or address the individual concerns of jail residents. That is why interview responses are reported in aggregate.

People we interviewed during every walkthrough we have conducted at PDP have expressed a fear of reprisal from staff for speaking with us. This is why all interviews and reporting are anonymous. When individuals raise specific concerns and ask the Prison Society for help in resolving their specific concerns, we give their name, ID number, and details of the complaint to our staff escorts.

A note of caution in interpreting the findings from our interviews with incarcerated people: the small sample size means that answers may be skewed. In addition, any survey conducted

in a prison setting should be viewed with the understanding that people in custody are likely unhappy with their circumstances and that this may lead them to enlarge complaints. Nevertheless, when you have people in different housing units who have no way of interacting with each other, reporting the same thing, that is an indication there is an issue. As the saying goes, where there is smoke, there is fire. Our interviews with incarcerated people indicate there is smoke but are insufficient to determine the precise scope or heat of the fire.

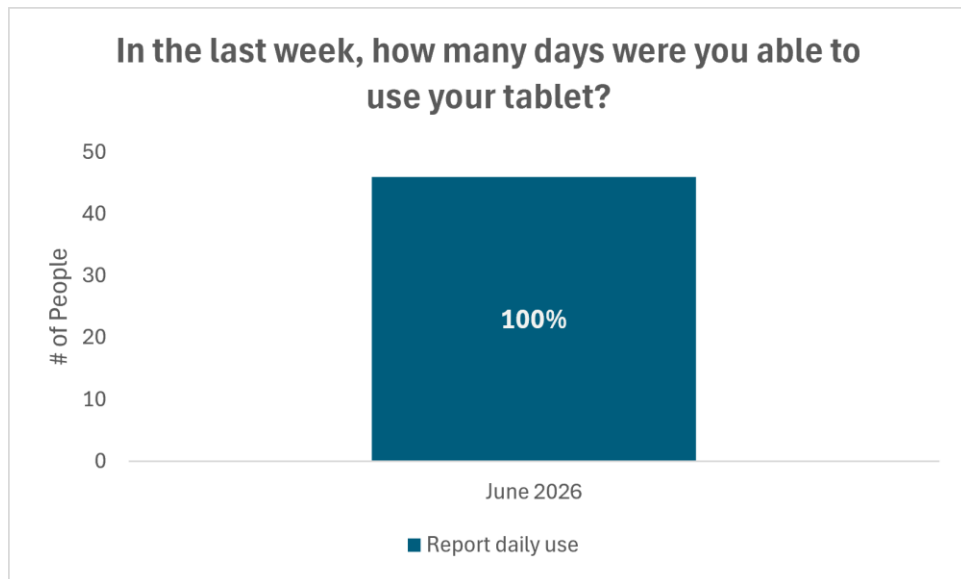
Tablets

In January 2026, a few months before our walkthrough, the PDP began distributing jail-provided tablets to all people in general population. Tablets are increasingly being used to facilitate common jail functions like placing commissary orders and filing grievances. Importantly, they also allow users to make phone and video calls in the privacy of their cell and without waiting for a pay phone or video kiosk to be available.

In addition to common jail functions, the tablets allow access to streaming music, movies, and other entertainment. Several people that we interviewed complained about the price of using the tablets. One man told us that they purchase pre-paid usage minutes at the rate \$0.05 per minute of usage. Our staff escort confirmed that usage is charged whenever a person is logged into their tablet, even if they are not actively using an application. People we interviewed said that the per minute charge is assessed even when using applications that require a subscription fee, resulting in a double charge.

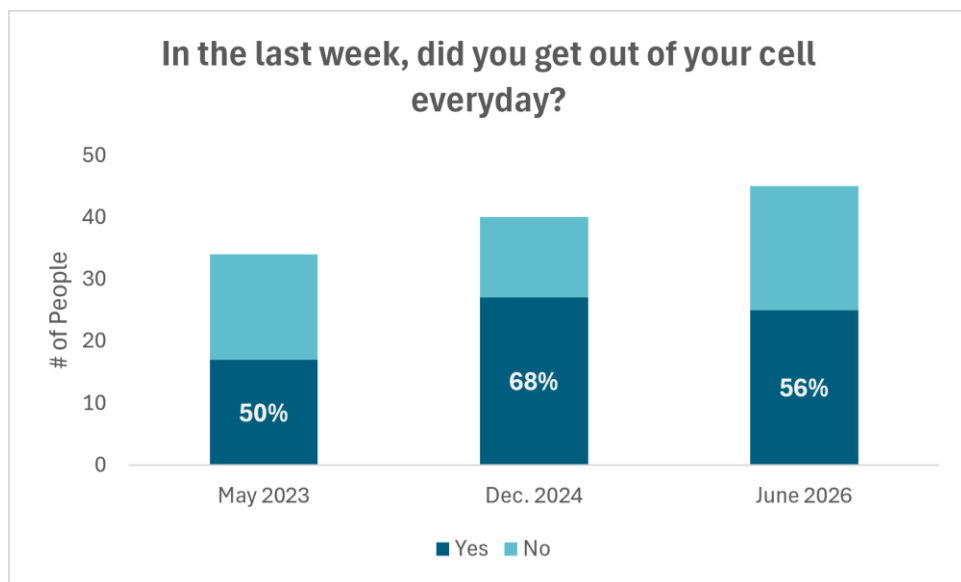
On the housing units that we visited, we observed that charging stations for tablets are located in the common area of the units and people only have access to charge their tablet when they are allowed out of their cell and into that common area. Our staff escorts confirmed this was the policy. Men we interviewed in one unit said that two of the three charging stations in the unit seemed to be malfunctioning and charging the tablets very slowly, so they all wait to use the one functional station.

In addition, men we interviewed on two different units reported that gaps and inconsistencies in the jail's wi-fi network meant that they could not use tablets in certain areas of the housing unit. In one unit, they reported that this impacted every cell on the second-floor tier.



Out of cell time

We asked 45 people if they were allowed out of their cell every day in the last week. Twenty-four people (56%) said that they were.

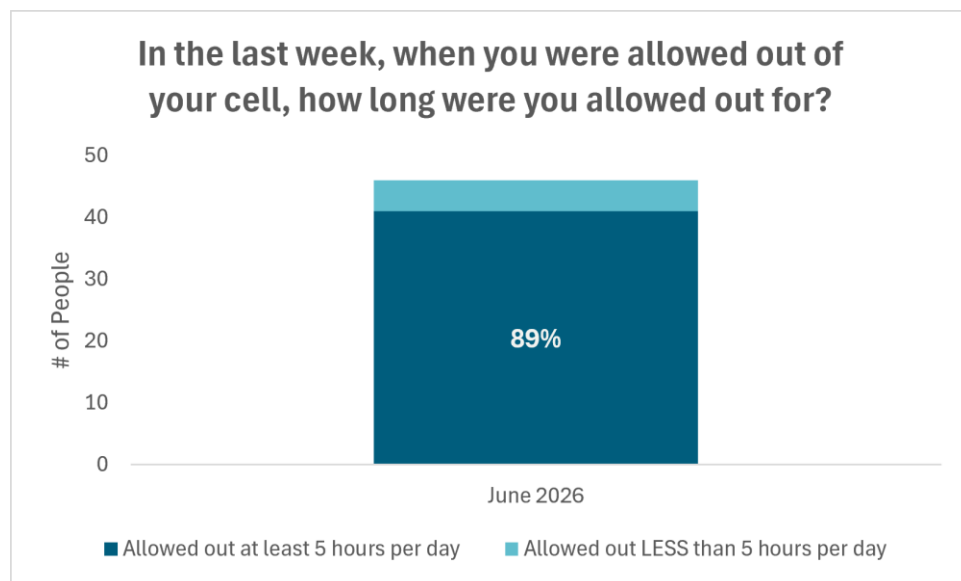


Most everyone reported that when they are let out, it is for at least five hours a day. This is a marked improvement from our December 2024 walkthrough of RCF when only 55% of men we interviewed reported being let out of their cells for three or more hours per day. Some men reported that how long they are allowed out occurs as arbitrary. One man said “on a good day (we could be out for) nine hours. On an average day, three to four hours.”

Men we interviewed detailed several ways out of cell time is restricted. They stated that they have designated recreation time 7:30-10:30am, 12:00-3:00pm, and 4:00-8:00pm, but staff do not let them out of their cells for one of these periods two or three days each week.

One group of men we interviewed emphasized that they are regularly “locked down for no reason.” Groups of men we spoke to in two different housing units explained that every week they have designated time to clean their cells. One unit reported that only four cells are let out at a time and given cleaning supplies, in another other unit we were told that 15 cells are let out at a time. Men we interviewed in both of these units said that this rotation takes three hours or more and is counted as recreation time. Our staff escort confirmed this practice. We previously reported this same procedure after our March 2026 walkthrough of Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility (CFCF).

Men we interviewed explained that when they are allowed out of their cells, they are not permitted to go back in unless they want to remain locked in for the rest of the recreation period. As a result, one shower is unofficially designated as “the pee shower” so that people can relieve themselves. They report that this is done with full awareness of staff. We reported this same situation after our August 2025 walkthrough of the Philadelphia Industrial Correctional Complex (PICC), and our March 2026 walkthrough of CFCF.

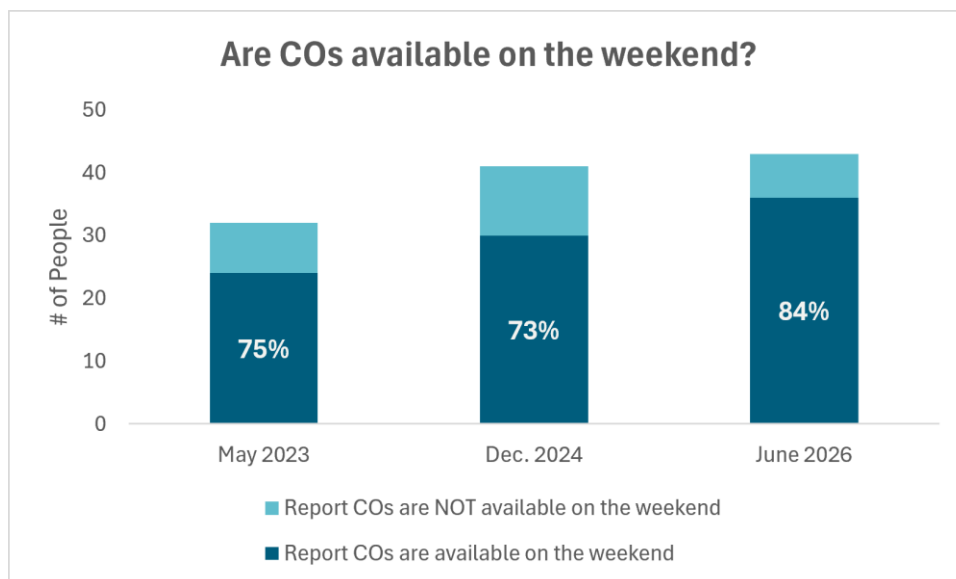
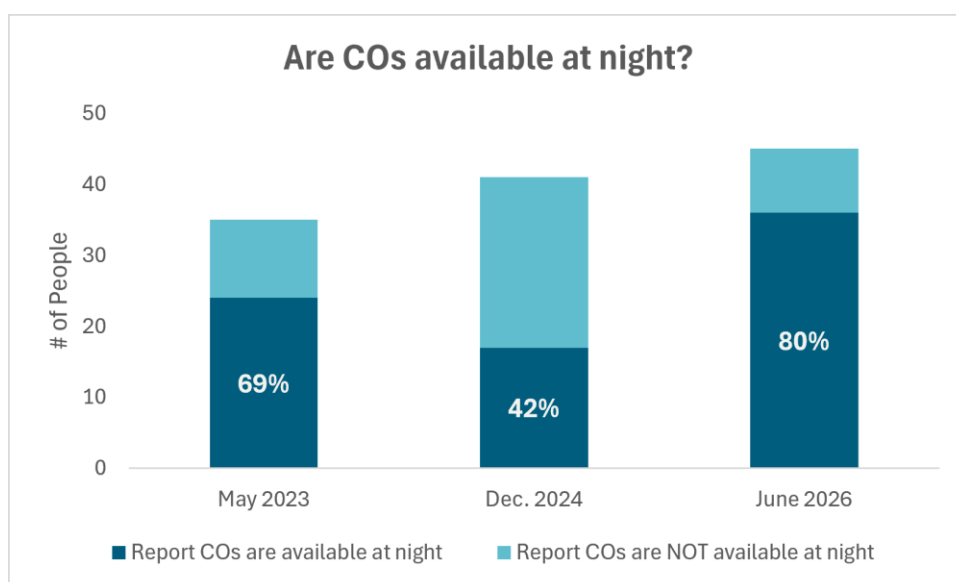


Staff supervision

We asked 45 people if corrections officers (COs) are available in the evenings. Almost all, 36 out of 45 (80%), said they are. This is a significant improvement from our March 2024 walkthrough when only 41% reported their presence. Thirty-four of the 43 people we asked (84%), said that staff are available on the weekends.

The reported availability of COs at RCF on nights and weekends stands in contrast to other PDP prisons. In our most recent prior walkthrough- of CFCF in March 2026- 39% of men we interviewed reported COs were available at night, and 37% reported that COs were available on the weekends.

Notably one man we interviewed complained that prison sergeants and other officials are largely absent from the housing unit, commenting “the white shirts (i.e. sergeants and other ranked officers) don’t want to talk to you. You’d have to get into an altercation with a guard to see one.”

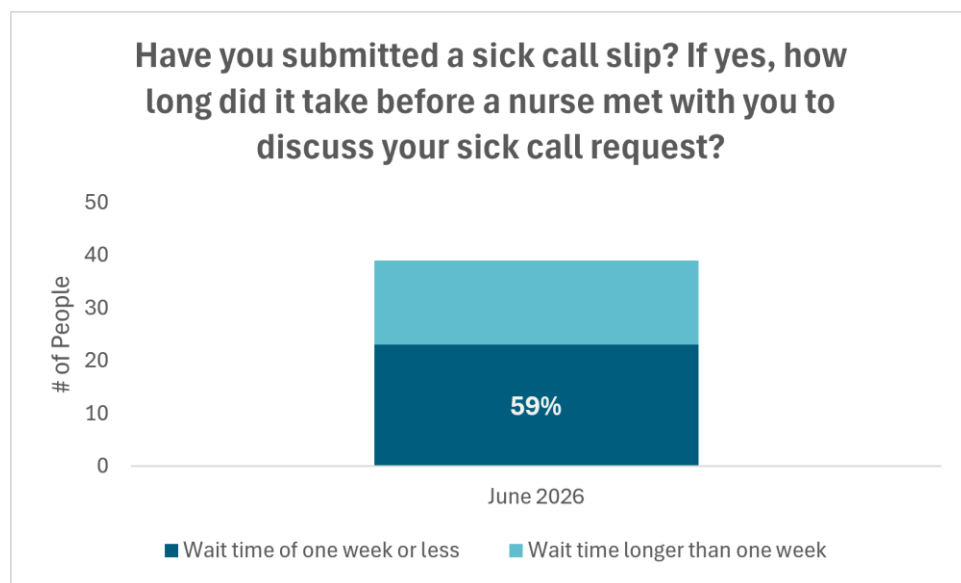


Access to medical care and counseling services

Of the 39 people we interviewed who said they had submitted a sick call slip to request medical care, 23 (59%) reported their request was responded to within one week or less.

The men we spoke to across all three units reported that each unit has specific wall mounted tablets that are used for submitting sick call requests- they cannot use their individually assigned tablets for sick call. Our staff escort confirmed this. In Unit H, however, we were told that the sick call tablets are mounted in the multi-purpose room which the staff keep locked during recreation periods, severely limiting their ability to file sick call requests. In contrast, men we interviewed in Unit F stated that the multi-purpose room was accessible for sick call tablets.

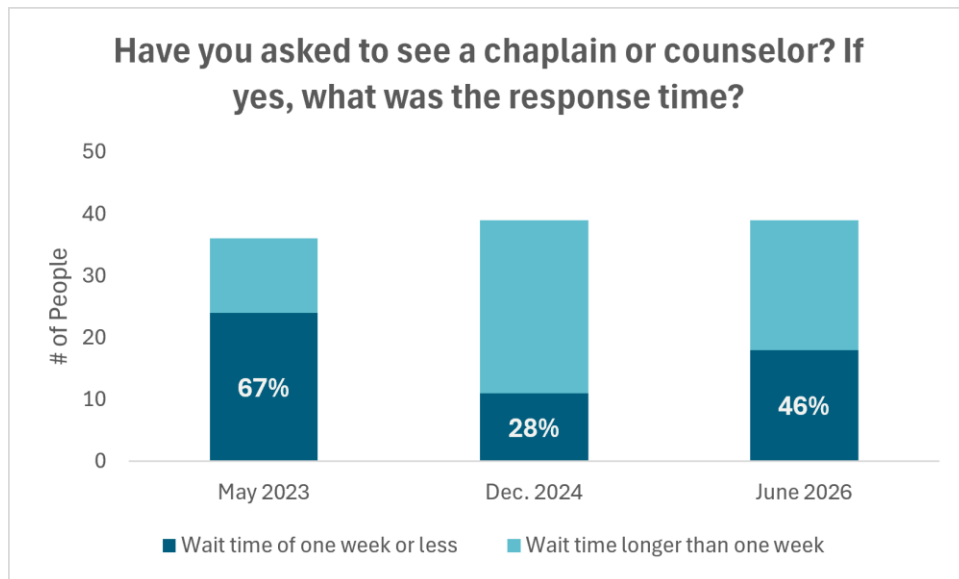
Other men we interviewed reported that the paperwork of sick call slips can get in the way of receiving care. One man reported that when medical personnel were on the unit, he approached them about an issue, was told to file a sick call request which he did and then had to wait several days to be seen. Another man with diabetes reported that COs sent him to the medical unit as he was unwell, but the medical staff sent him away because they didn't have a sick call request on file for him.



Of the 39 people we interviewed who said that they had asked to see a chaplain or counselor, 18 (46%) reported that their request was responded to within one week or less.

While we didn't ask questions about satisfaction with counselling services, several men spoke to us about it. They explained that counselors will only respond to their requests via a message on their tablet; when being seen in-person the counselor will rush them through the

conversation and out of the room; or that the counselor will limit the number of in-person sessions to one every 90 days. One man reflecting on the difficulty of getting to see a counselor said, “I don’t even know who the counselor is!”



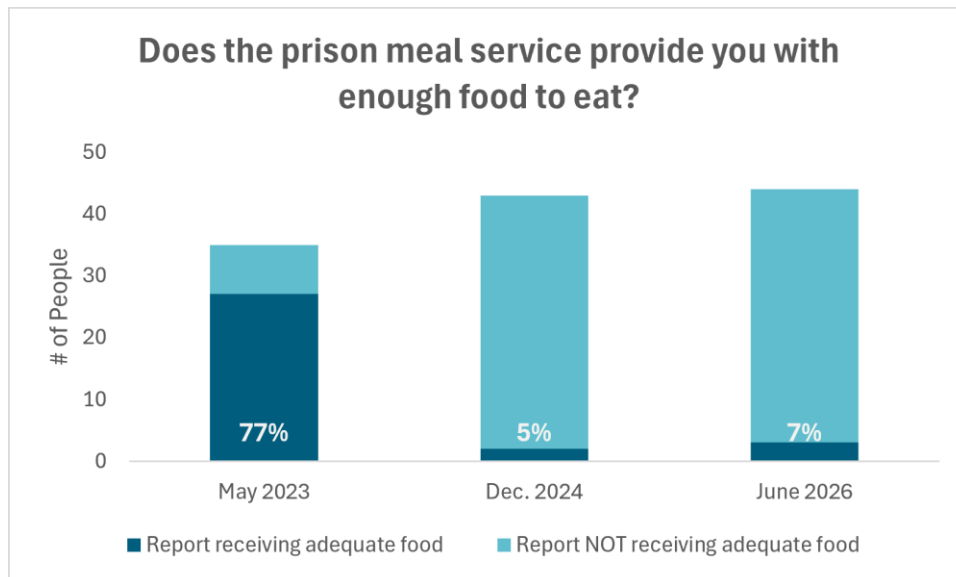
Inadequate food

Of the 44 people we asked, only three (7%) said that the prison meal service provided them with enough food to eat. The majority of people we have interviewed at every PDP facility since we began asking this question in March 2023 have reported insufficient food. We have observed meals being served over one dozen times and the portions have consistently appeared to be too small.

It's not enough for a kid and you wouldn't feed it to a dog.

No. And the food is horrendous.

Fuck no, it's inadequate. It doesn't reach the requirements for nutrition.



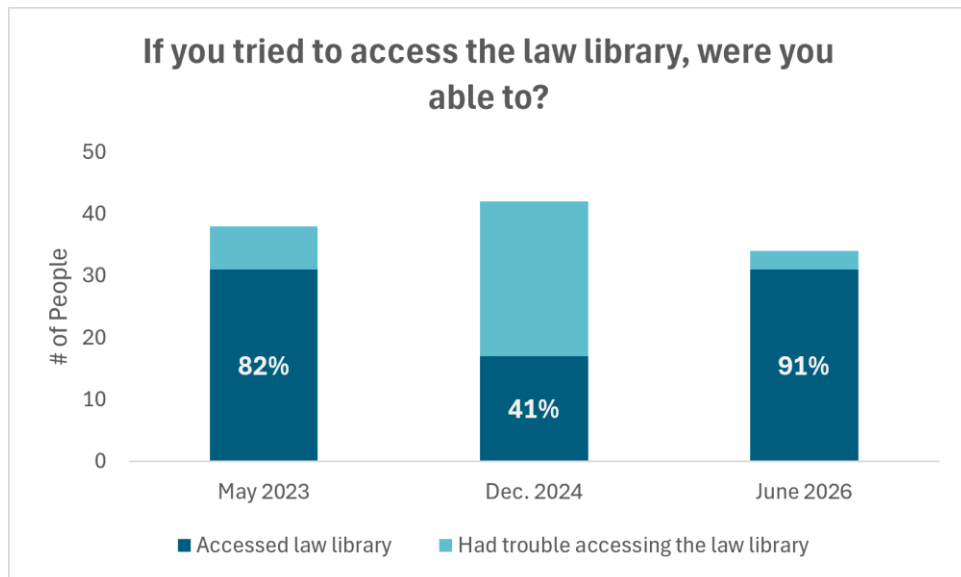
While we did not ask a question about food quality, several of the people we interviewed commented on it. People we interviewed stated, “it’s like they don’t take the time to cook it,” “it’s horrible,” “the food comes right to the edge of being too old (to eat),” “we are tired of eating old meals mixed in with some new food,” and “sausages and pancakes were (served) frozen this morning.”

Law library

Of the 34 people we interviewed who said they had tried to access the law library, 31 (91%) said they were able to get to the library. This is a significant improvement from our December 2024 walkthrough of RCF when only 40% of people we interviewed reported being able to access the law library.

Despite access to the library, men we interviewed in two different units reported that there is no librarian on-site to assist them, making it difficult to find and utilize resources.

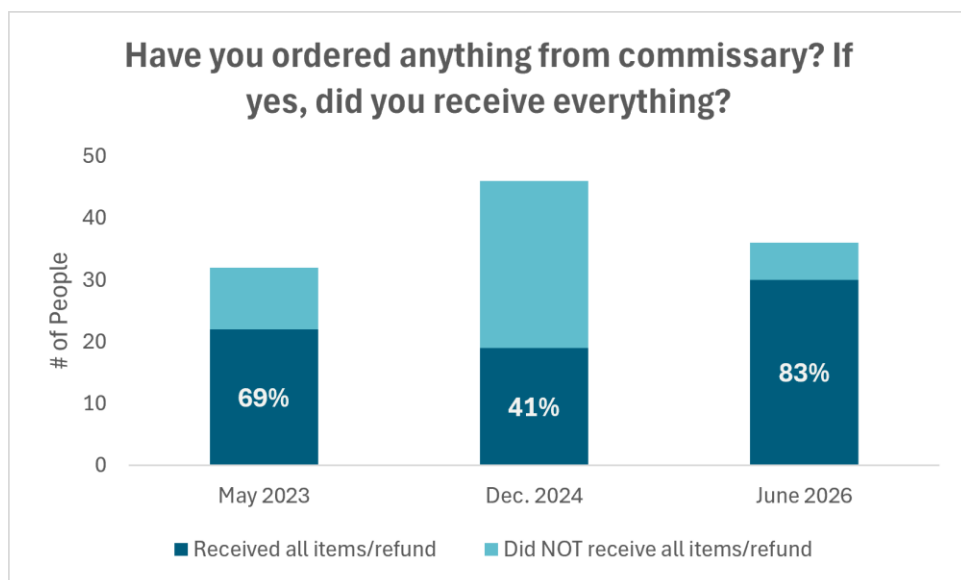
Access to law library databases is also available on the jail provided tablets, however men we spoke to explained that it can be hard to utilize the law resources on the tablets given the small screen and lack of access to a librarian to assist.



Commissary

When asked about ordering items from commissary, 30 of the 36 (83%) people who said they had ordered from commissary reported that the system worked well with timely order delivery and refunds when items were out of stock.

One man said “I been waiting four months for a refund.” Other people we interviewed complained that commissary prices are too high and a lack of healthy food items to order: “it’s all salt and sugar.”

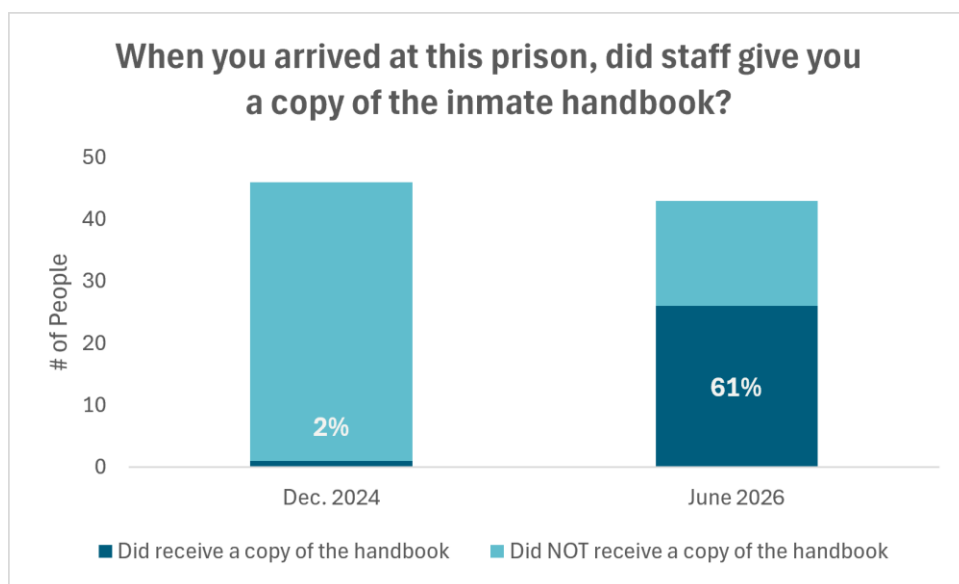


Inmate handbook

Twenty-six of the 43 people we asked (61%) said they received a copy of the inmate handbook at some point during their stay at PDP. This is a major improvement from our prior walkthrough of RCF in December 2024 when only two percent of the men we interviewed reported receiving a copy.

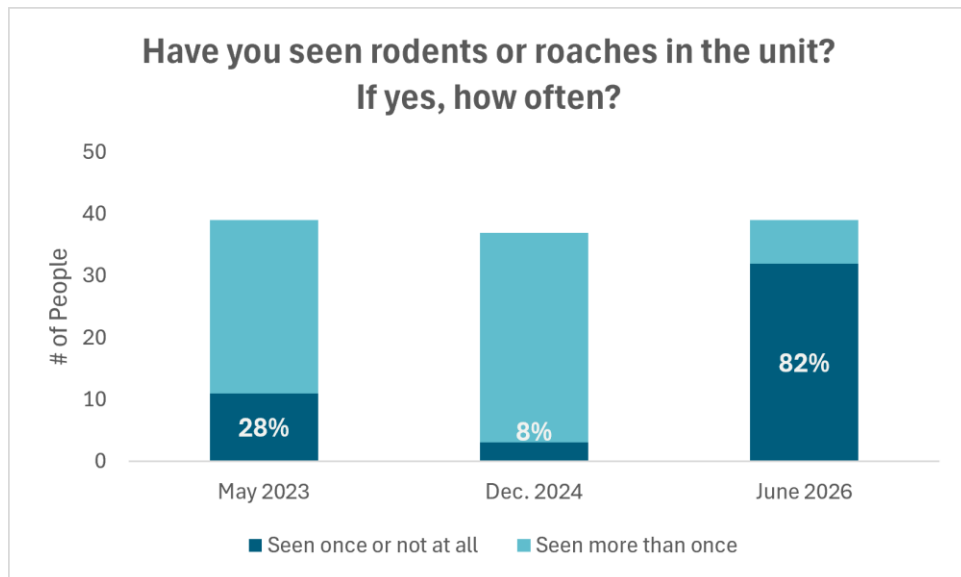
I just got one three days ago, you got to get in an altercation (with staff) just to get one.

(It is) only on the tablet.



Hygiene

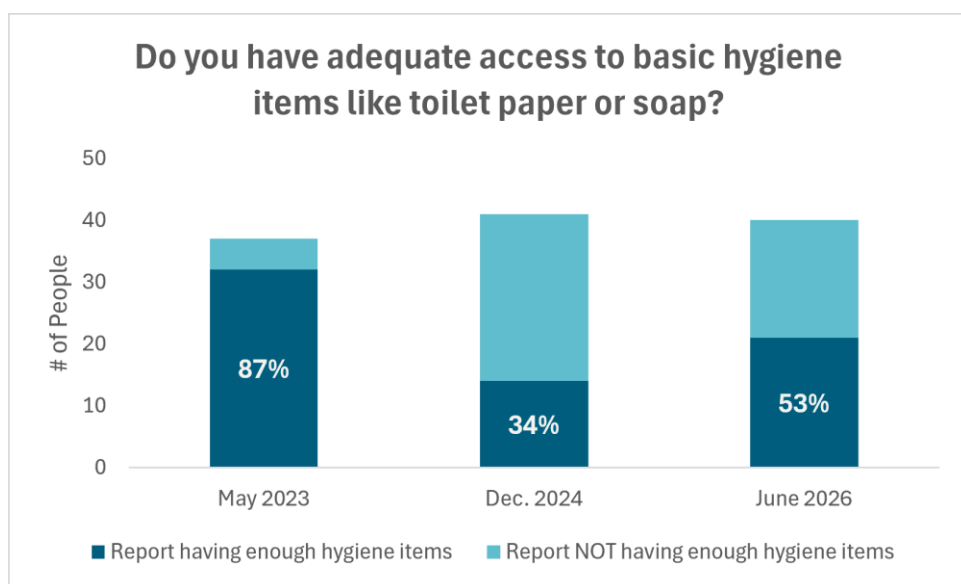
Seven of the 39 people we asked (18%) reported seeing rodents or cockroaches multiple times in their housing unit. This is a major improvement from our December 2024 walkthrough when 92% of people reported issues with pest control. In Commissioner Resnick's response to our memo documenting our March 2026 walkthrough of CFCF, he stated that the PDP has begun serving meals in housing units' common areas as opposed to cells in order to reduce the presence of rodents and cockroaches. We are happy to see that this appears to be working.



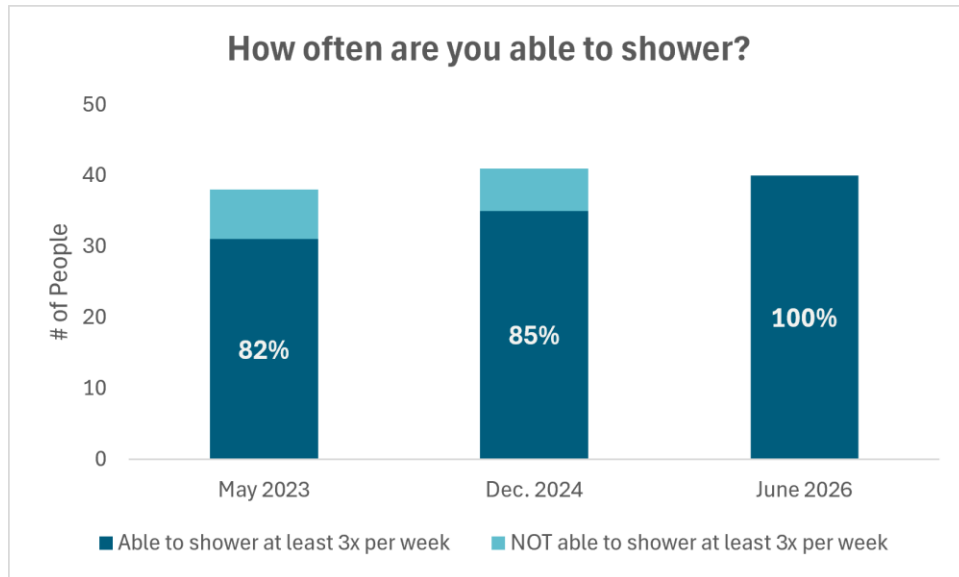
When asked if they have adequate access to basic hygiene products like toilet paper and soap, 21 of the 40 people we asked (52%) said that they do. Enough toilet paper and soap are not only a problem for hygiene, but also for facility safety, as in prior walkthroughs men have reported a black market for toilet paper. When asked what they do when they run out of toilet paper, one group of men said, “people who are mentally unstable use their hands and their shirts.”

We don't get in every week like we're supposed to.

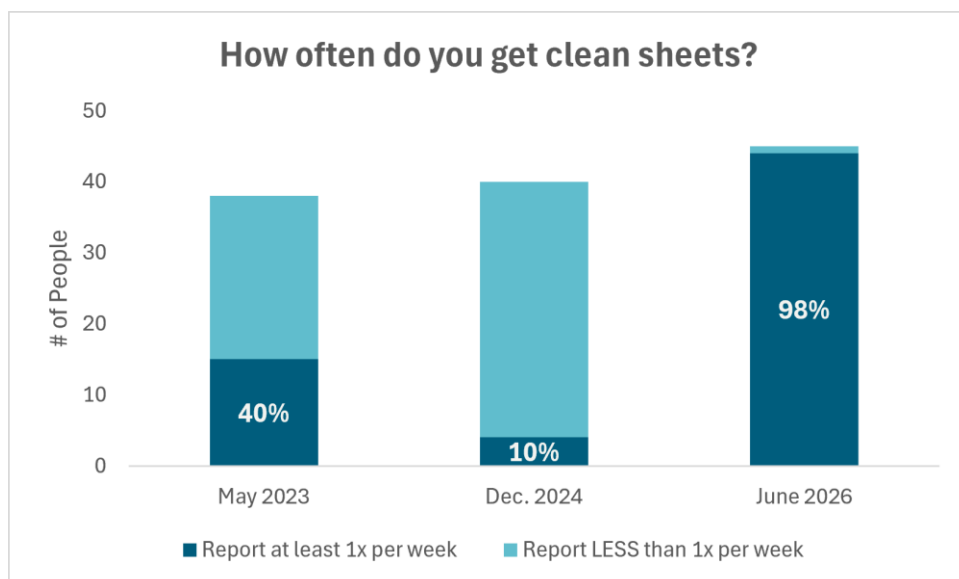
We have to beg them.

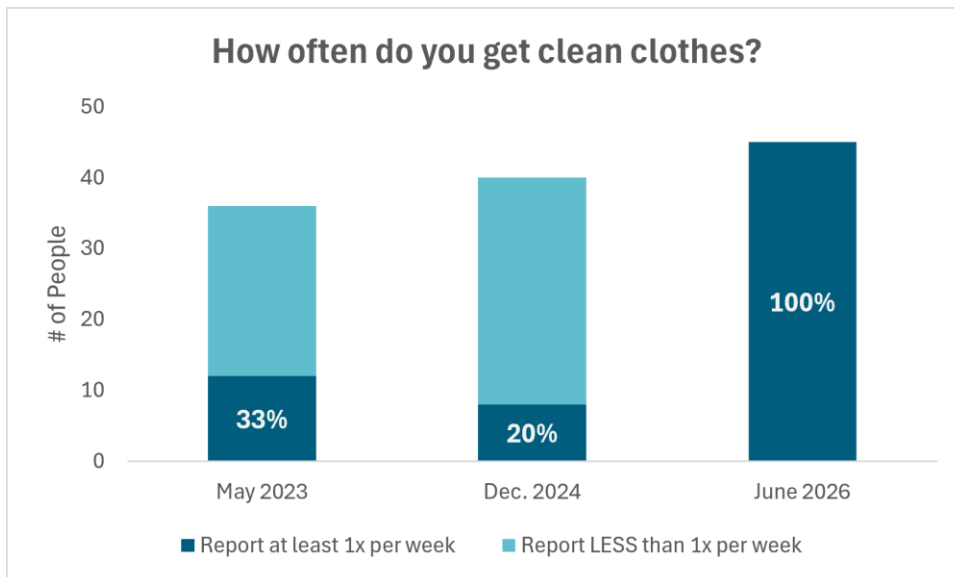


All 40 of the people we asked (100%) reported that they are able to shower at least three days a week. Men in Unit H however reported that only four of the unit's 16 showers were working. They explained that in a unit housing 109 men this situation can lead to long wait times and tension between people.



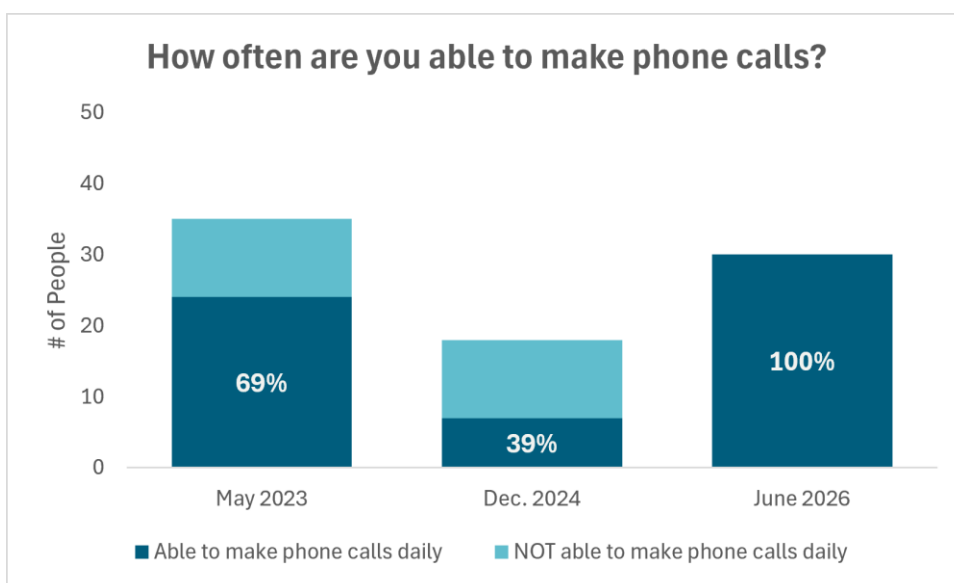
When asked how often they are getting clean sheets, 43 out of the 44 people we asked (98%) said it was happening on a weekly basis. When asked about getting clean clothes, all 45 people we asked (100%) reported they receive clean clothes every week. They clarified however that this is because they have access to washers and dryers in their housing unit five days a week where they can do their own laundry.



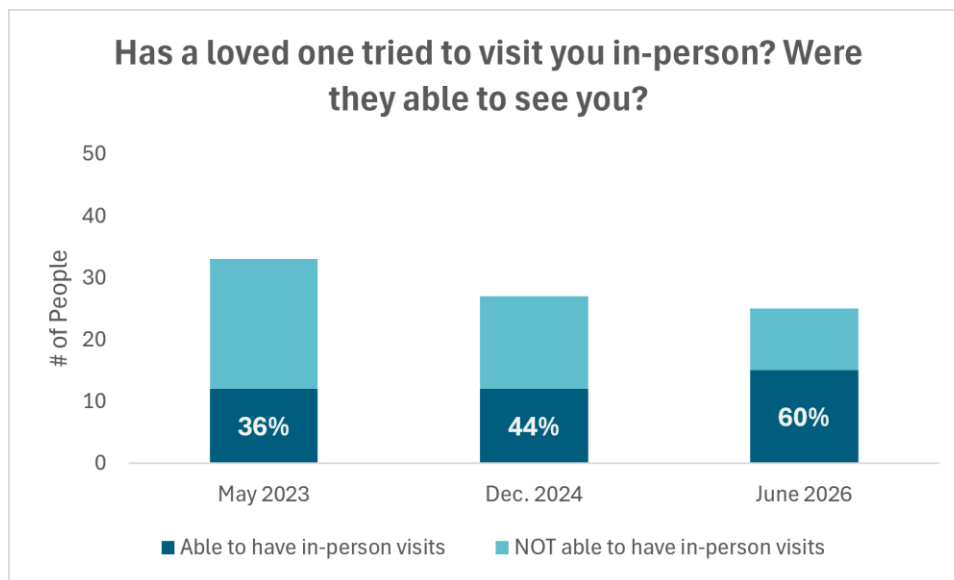


Communications

When asked, “how often are you able to make phone calls?” all 30 of the people we asked said they could make a call at least once a day. One group of men we interviewed explained they can make phone calls “all day long on the tablet ‘till 10:30(pm).” As reported from our prior walkthrough of CFCF in June 2026, the PDP issuing tablets to all incarcerated people has significantly increased their ability to make phone calls, an improvement greatly appreciated by the men we interviewed.



Of the 25 people we spoke to who said that a family member had attempted to visit them in-person, ten (40%) said the visit was able to happen. Men we interviewed stated that the process of visiting was “too much hassle,” related to the incarcerated person transferring buildings and going through multiple strip searches they found invasive. Men we interviewed also reported that families struggled with online scheduling, long wait times upon arrival at PDP, and unprofessional treatment from PDP staff resulting in missed visits.



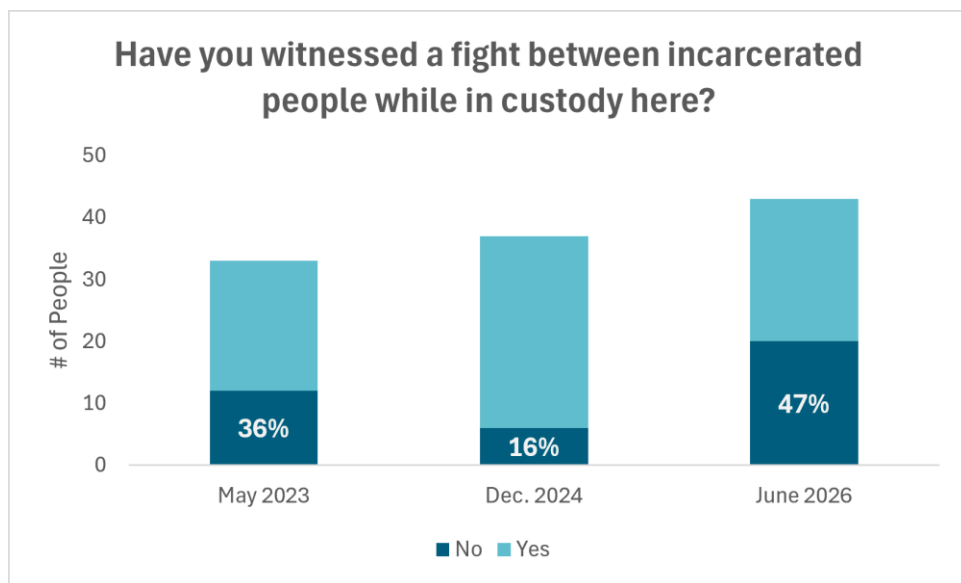
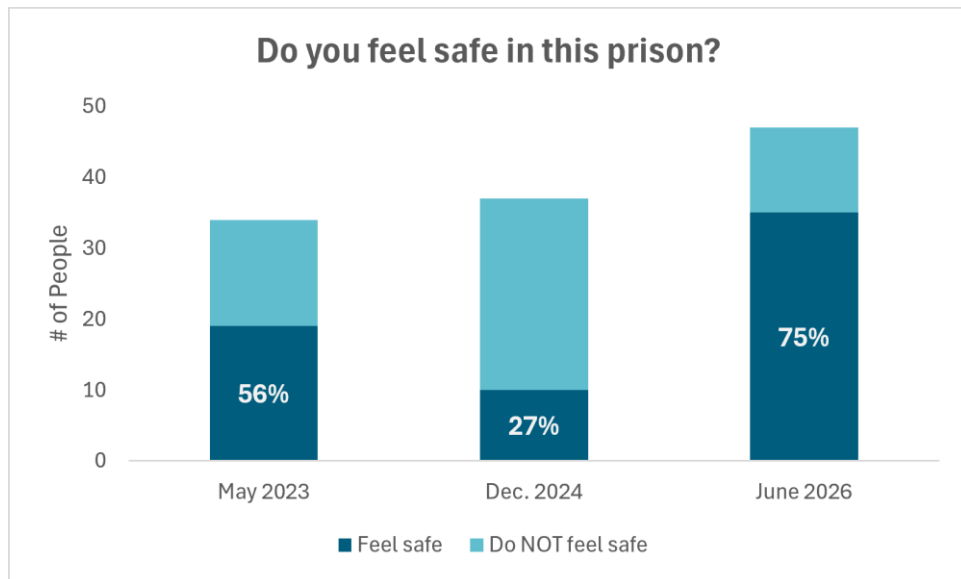
Men in RCF expressed frustration with the new PDP policy limiting family connection

A new PDP policy limits each incarcerated person to a single list of five people they are allowed to communicate with via phone call, video call, or in-person visit. This list can only be changed once every 90 days. The men we spoke to said that they previously had a list of only five people to call but that they were allowed an unlimited number of people for video calls or in-person visits. Several men we spoke to said that the new policy made it difficult to maintain family connections, especially with elderly or remotely located family members who cannot visit in-person. One group also reported that if they want to speak with their lawyer, that uses one of their five names. We heard similar frustration with this new policy on our March 2026 walkthrough of CFCF.

Violence

Twelve of the 47 people we asked (75%) reported feeling safe in RCF. While this is a significant improvement from our December 2024 walkthrough, one quarter of interviewees reporting feeling unsafe is still a cause for concern.

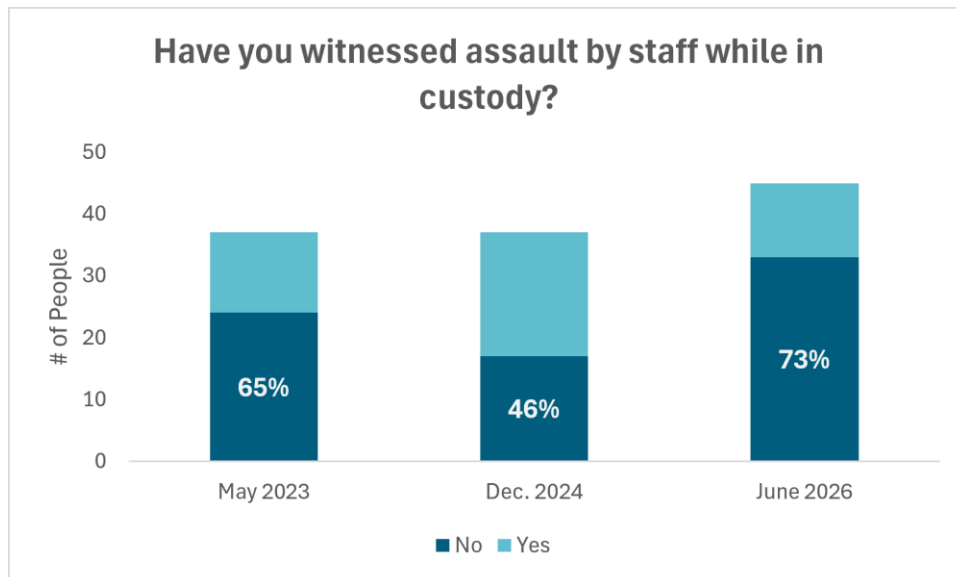
Twenty-three out of the 43 people we asked (53%) reported witnessing fights between incarcerated people in RCF.



Twelve out of the 45 people we asked (27%) reported witnessing assault by staff. People we interviewed additionally reported that verbal abuse and provocation are common. Two men said that staff “tell other people what you’re in for,” potentially provoking conflict between incarcerated people.

I’ve heard staff talk crazy to provoke people (into altercations).

I seen staff be excessive with their mace.



Lights in cells

One group of men we interviewed in Unit H reported that lights in their cells are kept on 24 hours a day and are only dimmed approximately 10% at night making it very difficult to sleep. They told us that staff control the lights, in contrast to CFCF which has light switches inside the cells, and that staff tell them that the lights are kept on “for security purposes,” without further explanation. Recent reporting from the University of Texas, Austin has highlighted how such “routine conditions and operational practices in carceral settings systematically disrupt sleep and how those disruptions impact the health and safety of incarcerated people and staff.”ⁱⁱⁱ

What does a good day look like?

The final question of our interview is “What does a good day in this jail look like?” The question focuses on positive aspects of the prison experience, a vantage point that is often overlooked but can provide important ideas for how to improve conditions. When people have a good day, they are less likely to commit infractions, and the jail is more likely to run in an orderly manner.

Interview responses universally focused on simple themes like decent food, access to phone calls, recreation time, and the absence of harassment or mistreatment. Comments included: “get a visit, get commissary, and talk to your loved on the tablet,” and “commissary, going to court.”

Recommendations

This walkthrough showed significant improvement in several areas. Staff supervision of housing units, especially in the evenings, has greatly expanded, likely owed to the PDP's recent success with recruitment and hiring. Most people can now access the law library, phone calls, inmate handbooks, and laundry. In addition, commissary is running well, and pest control is effective.

These are impressive improvements that positively impact people's day-to-day lives. While some of this progress relates circumstances unique to RCF (e.g. washers and dryers located inside housing units that residents can use freely), much of it has been accomplished due to hard work by PDP staff and administration and we look forward to seeing it replicated at the three other prisons on State Road.

The City's investment in the Department of Prisons must continue. The Department's work to recruit, train, and improve staff must continue. The criminal justice stakeholders' initiatives to address inefficiencies in the judicial process to help reduce the amount of time people spend in jail must continue.

In the interim, some issues at RCF including inadequate food, insufficient basic hygiene items like soap and toilet paper, and access to counseling staff need to be addressed. Doing so will make a tremendous difference in the lives of people in the custody of the City of Philadelphia. As the interviewees' responses to our question "what does good day look like" clearly reflect, simple improvements to day-to-day issues can have a significant impact.

Finally, the new policy restricting each incarcerated person to a single list of five people they are allowed to communicate with via phone call, video call, or in-person visits, appears to have negative implications for both incarcerated people and their families. It limits the number of people an incarcerated person may remain in contact with – even though maintaining family and community connection is vital for successful reentry. We hope that the Prison will revisit this new policy, perhaps increasing the number of people allowed on the unified list or reverting back to a separate list for in-person visits.

We look forward to the City's response to this memorandum, and we look forward to our next walkthrough in September 2026.

ⁱ United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Thomas Remick et al, v. City of Philadelphia, No.:2:20-cv-01959-BMS <https://www.phila.gov/documents/philadelphia-department-of-prisons-monit-ors-reports/>

ⁱⁱ Commissioner Michael Resnick, Chief of Staff Greg Vrato, Deputy Commissioner Jeremy Nash, Warden Patricia Powers

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://utexas.app.box.com/v/SleepinCustody>

Philadelphia: RCF Walkthrough Appendix

May 2023 – June 2026

	May 2023		Dec. 2024		June 2026	
Total Interviewed	39		47		49	
	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
In the last week, did you get out of your cell everyday?						
Yes	17	50%	27	68%	25	56%
No	17	50%	13	33%	20	44%
In the last week, when you were allowed out of your cell, how long were you allowed out for?						
Allowed out at least 3 hours per day	22	65%	18	45%	N/A	N/A
Allowed out LESS than 3 hours per day	12	35%	22	55%	N/A	N/A
Allowed out at least 5 hours per day	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	41	89%
Allowed out LESS than 5 hours per day	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5	11%

Are COs available at night?

Report COs are available at night	24	69%	17	42%	36	80%
Report COs are NOT available at night	11	31%	24	59%	9	20%

Are COs available on the weekend?

Report COs are available on the weekend	24	75%	30	73%	36	84%
Report COs are NOT available on the weekend	8	25%	11	27%	7	16%

Have you ever used the in-cell buzzer system? Did the COs respond?

Report COs did respond	9	25%	13	33%	9	30%
Report COs did NOT respond	27	75%	27	68%	21	70%

In the last week, how many days were you able to use your tablet?

Report daily use	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	46	100%
Report less than daily use	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0%

How often are you able to make phone calls?

Able to make phone calls daily	24	69%	7	39%	30	100%
NOT able to make phone calls daily	11	31%	11	61%	0	0%

Has a loved one tried to visit you in-person? Were they able to see you?

Able to have in-person visits	12	36%	12	44%	15	60%
NOT able to have in-person visits	21	64%	15	56%	10	40%

When you arrived at this prison, did staff give you a copy of the inmate handbook?

Did receive a copy of the handbook	N/A	N/A	1	2%	26	61%
Did NOT receive a copy of the handbook	N/A	N/A	45	98%	17	40%

If you tried to access the law library, were you able to?

Accessed law library	31	82%	17	41%	31	91%
Had trouble accessing the law library	7	18%	25	60%	3	9%

Have you ordered anything from commissary? If yes, did you receive everything?

Received all items/refund	22	69%	19	41%	30	83%
Did NOT receive all items/refund	10	31%	27	59%	6	17%

Have you asked to see a chaplain or counselor? If yes, what was the response time?

Wait time of one week or less	24	67%	11	28%	18	46%
Wait time longer than one week	12	33%	28	72%	21	54%

Have you submitted a sick call slip? If yes, what was the response time?

Wait time of one week or less	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	23	59%
Wait time longer than one week	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	16	41%

Does the prison meal service provide you with enough food to eat?

Report receiving adequate food	27	77%	2	5%	3	7%
Report NOT receiving adequate food	8	23%	41	95%	41	93%

Do you go hungry between meals?

Report NOT being hungry between meals	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	2%
Report being hungry between meals	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	41	98%

Do you have adequate access to basic hygiene items like toilet paper or soap?

Report having enough hygiene items	32	87%	14	34%	21	53%
Report NOT having enough hygiene items	5	14%	27	66%	19	48%

How often are you able to shower?

Able to shower at least 3x per week	31	82%	35	85%	40	100%
NOT able to shower at least 3x per week	7	18%	6	15%	0	0%

Have you seen rodents or roaches in the unit? If yes, how often?

Seen once or not at all	11	28%	3	8%	32	82%
Seen more than once	28	72%	34	92%	7	18%

How often do you get clean sheets?

Report at least 1x per week	15	40%	4	10%	44	98%
Report LESS than 1x per week	23	61%	36	90%	1	2%

How often do you get clean clothes?

Report at least 1x per week	12	33%	8	20%	45	100%
Report LESS than 1x per week	24	67%	32	80%	0	0%

Do you feel safe in this prison?

Feel safe	19	56%	10	27%	35	75%
Do NOT feel safe	15	44%	27	73%	12	26%

Have you witnessed a fight between incarcerated people while in custody here?

No	12	36%	6	16%	20	47%
Yes	21	64%	31	84%	23	54%

Have you witnessed assault by staff while in custody?

No	24	65%	17	46%	33	73%
Yes	13	35%	20	54%	12	27%



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
DEPARTMENT OF PRISONS
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
7901 State Road
Philadelphia, PA 19136

(215) 685-8201 FAX (215) 685-8577
E-Mail: michael.resnick@prisons.phila.gov Website: <https://www.phila.gov/prisons/>

Michael R. Resnick, Esquire
Commissioner

September 21, 2026

Claire Shubik-Richards
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Prison Society
230 S. Broad St., Suite 605
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Ms. Shubik-Richards,

I am writing in response to your September 3, 2026 memorandum concerning the Philadelphia Department of Prisons (PDP), based on the Pennsylvania Prison Society tour of the Riverside Correctional Facility (RCF) on June 16, 2026. The tour was conducted by Prison Monitoring Director Noah Barth, Regional Manager Dzemila Bilanovic, and Prison Society Volunteer Andrea Striepen. The tour was escorted by PDP senior staff and myself.

First, I appreciate your acknowledgement that you observed “notable improvements in conditions, including:

- Staff Supervision
- Access to the law library
- Commissary
- Access to phone calls
- Distribution of inmate handbooks
- Pest Control
- Access to laundry
- Sense of Safety

I also appreciate your acknowledgement that “...the small sample size means that answers may be skewed...any survey conducted in a prison setting should be viewed with the understanding that people in custody are likely unhappy with their circumstances and that this may lead them to enlarge complaints.”

In any event, we are otherwise striving to provide the best services we can to our incarcerated population. I will address your concerns in turn.

Tablets

While acknowledging some of the great positives that stem from the PDP's implementation of individual tablets for our population, you also share concerns regarding improper fees being charged for tablet services. You state that several incarcerated people you interviewed complained about the price of using the tablets, stating that there was a per-minute charge and that improper/double charges were being assessed.

The assertion that a fee is assessed merely because an individual is logged onto the tablet is incorrect. No fee is incurred solely by logging into or remaining logged onto the tablet. There is no per-minute charge. A fee is assessed only when an individual accesses an application or service for which a fee applies.

There are multiple ways in which the tablet may be utilized, including through prepaid minutes and bundled subscription packages. Accordingly, fees may vary depending upon the specific service or application being accessed.

Furthermore, when an application or service is included as part of a subscription or bundled package, any applicable charges are assessed in accordance with the terms of that package. The individual is not charged a separate additional fee for the same service when it is already included within the applicable subscription or bundle.

Availability of Tablet Chargers

You also raised a concern regarding the availability of tablet charging. You state that you observed that charging stations for tablets are located in the common area of the housing units and raise the concern that individuals only have access to charge their tablet when they are allowed out of their cell and into that common area.

The tablet charging stations are conveniently located within the dayrooms of each housing area and are readily accessible to individuals when they are out of their cells.

It should be noted, however, that during periods of restricted movement, particularly when such restrictions extend for significant periods of time, the Block Representative and/or Alternate, as well as designated Housing Unit Workers, are authorized to transport tablets to and from the charging stations on behalf of the housing unit, barring any security concerns.

Given that the population is generally permitted out of their cells for up to ten hours each day, individuals have ample opportunity to access the charging stations and maintain their tablets in a charged condition. Accordingly, the location and availability of the charging stations provide reasonable and sufficient access for routine tablet charging.

Inoperable Charging Stations and Unreliable Wi-Fi

You state “[m]en we interviewed in one unit said that two of the three charging stations in the unit seemed to be malfunctioning and charging the tablets very slowly, so they all wait to use the one functional station. In addition, men we interviewed on two different units reported that gaps and inconsistencies in the jail’s wi-fi network meant that they could not use tablets in certain areas of the housing unit. In one unit, they reported that this impacted every cell on the second-floor tier.”

Work orders, along with direct communication with the IPCS Supervisor and tablet vendor representatives, are routinely utilized to identify, address, and resolve reported issues involving tablet charging and connectivity.

As part of these ongoing efforts, many of the charging stations throughout the facility were recently refitted with charging cables that provide improved accessibility and ease of use. There is more work planned and scheduled on this issue as well. Additionally, Wi-Fi extenders have been installed in multiple locations to improve connectivity and expand reliable access to the tablet system.

The Department recognizes that this is a new initiative for the PDP and that the tablets have generated significantly greater participation and demand than initially anticipated. As usage continues to increase, the Department will continue to monitor system performance and address legitimate concerns regarding charging, connectivity, and access through the appropriate operational and technical channels.

Time Out of Cell

“We asked 45 people if they were allowed out of their cell every day in the last week. Twenty four people (56%) said that they were.”

One of the housing units toured, H-Unit, had been subject to restricted movement for several days during the week preceding the visit due to a pending investigation. This operational restriction likely contributed to the more negative responses expressed by individuals housed in that unit during the tour.

It is important to note, however, that restricted movement did not prevent individuals housed in H-Unit from accessing essential services and activities. Individuals continued to be permitted to attend scheduled programs and medical or other necessary appointments, and all required services continued to be provided during the period of restriction. Additionally, individuals maintained regular access to the tablet charging stations, allowing them to charge their tablets despite the movement restrictions.

Accordingly, while the extended restricted movement may have influenced the perceptions and responses of the H-Unit population, the restriction did not result in a suspension of required services, programming, appointments, or reasonable access to tablet charging.

“Most everyone reported that when they are let out, it is for at least five hours a day. This is a marked improvement from our December 2024 walkthrough of RCF when only 55% of men we

interviewed reported being let out of their cells for three or more hours per day. Some men reported that how long they are allowed out occurs as arbitrary. One man said “on a good day (we could be out for) nine hours. On an average day, three to four hours.” 4 Men we interviewed detailed several ways out of cell time is restricted. They stated that they have designated recreation time 7:30-10:30am, 12:00-3:00pm, and 4:00-8:00pm, but staff do not let them out of their cells for one of these periods two or three days each week. One group of men we interviewed emphasized that they are regularly “locked down for no reason.” Groups of men we spoke to in two different housing units explained that every week they have designated time to clean their cells. One unit reported that only four cells are let out at a time and given cleaning supplies, in another other unit we were told that 15 cells are let out at a time. Men we interviewed in both of these units said that this rotation takes three hours or more and is counted as recreation time.”

The noted recreation periods for RCF are accurate, and, under normal operating conditions, provide for up to ten hours of out-of-cell time per day. However, the published schedule represents the maximum scheduled opportunity for out-of-cell time and does not account for operational circumstances that periodically require restrictions or modifications to that schedule.

Several recreation periods may be restricted each week for legitimate operational and security-related reasons, including cell searches, General Inspection (GI) activities involving cell and common-area cleaning, staff training, investigations, and other necessary facility operations.

Accordingly, while the recreation schedule appropriately reflects the maximum scheduled out-of-cell opportunity, actual out-of-cell time may vary based upon the operational needs of the facility. These temporary restrictions are necessary to maintain the safety, security, sanitation, and orderly operation of the facility.

Ability to Return to Cells

“Men we interviewed explained that when they are allowed out of their cells, they are not permitted to go back in unless they want to remain locked in for the rest of the recreation period. As a result, one shower is unofficially designated as “the pee shower” so that people can relieve themselves. They report that this is done with full awareness of staff. We reported this same situation after our August 2025 walkthrough of the Philadelphia Industrial Correctional Complex (PICC), and our March 2026 walkthrough of CFCF.”

The population is routinely encouraged to maintain appropriate personal hygiene and to utilize available opportunities to access their cells for restroom purposes. Individuals may request access to their cells during regular Officer tours when they need to use the restroom or attend to other personal hygiene needs.

Staff have also been regularly reminded through facility-wide announcements and supervisory direction that individuals should not be unnecessarily restricted from returning to their cells when they appropriately request access for restroom or hygiene purposes. The Department expects staff to exercise reasonable judgment in facilitating such requests while maintaining appropriate

security and operational controls. Staff are fully aware that a “pee shower” is not to be permitted and any staff found to be allowing the same will be disciplined accordingly.

Restroom access is never to be unnecessarily restricted. Staff are expected to accommodate legitimate requests consistent with the safe and orderly operation of the housing unit.

Staff supervision

“We asked 45 people if corrections officers (COs) are available in the evenings. Almost all, 36 out of 45 (80%), said they are. This is a significant improvement from our March 2024 walkthrough when only 41% reported their presence. Thirty-four of the 43 people we asked (84%), said that staff are available on the weekends.”

I’m pleased with the positive response on this issue. As the PDP continues to recruit, hire, and graduate additional Correctional Officers, while also promoting Supervisors, staffing levels will continue to be maintained in accordance with our established staffing matrixes. The RCF facility takes considerable pride in the commitment and reliability demonstrated by its staff, particularly with respect to evening and weekend coverage and during emergency situations. Employees who demonstrate exceptional attendance, dedication, and commitment to the Department’s mission are routinely recognized and commended for their service.

Additionally, supervisory presence within the housing units is an important component of effective facility management. RCF Supervisors, beginning with senior leadership, routinely conduct tours of the housing units and engage directly with the population. This visible and consistent leadership presence allows supervisors to identify concerns, address issues before they escalate, reinforce expectations, and promote the safe and orderly operation of the facility.

Sick Call Access

“Of the 39 people we interviewed who said they had submitted a sick call slip to request medical care, 23 (59%) reported their request was responded to within one week or less. The men we spoke to across all three units reported that each unit has specific wall mounted tablets that are used for submitting sick call requests- they cannot use their individually assigned tablets for sick call. Our staff escort confirmed this. In Unit H, however, we were told that the sick call tablets are mounted in the multi-purpose room which the staff keep locked during recreation periods, severely limiting their ability to file sick call requests. In contrast, men we interviewed in Unit F stated that the multi-purpose room was accessible for sick call tablets. Other men we interviewed reported that the paperwork of sick call slips can get in the way of receiving care. One man reported that when medical personnel were on the unit, he approached them about an issue, was told to file a sick call request which he did and then had to wait several days to be seen. Another man with diabetes reported that COs sent him to the medical unit as he was unwell, but the medical staff sent him away because they didn’t have a sick call request on file for him.”

Sick Call Requests are now available to the population through their personal tablets, while paper Sick Call Request slips continue to be readily available on every housing unit. The continued availability of paper requests was verified during a recent NCCHC survey.

The shared, wall-mounted tablets are in the process of being removed, as the rooms in which they are located are being repurposed for programming and other activities. This transition does not eliminate or otherwise restrict access to the Sick Call Request process, as individuals continue to have both electronic and paper options for submitting routine medical requests.

It should also be understood that medical staff present on a housing unit are generally responding to an emergency call or performing another specifically assigned clinical function. Their presence on the unit should not be interpreted as a routine Sick Call intake period or as an indication that they are available to receive and process individual routine requests.

When an individual reports feeling unwell or identifies a medical concern to medical or security staff on a unit and is subsequently referred to Medical, medical personnel assess and triage the reported concern and determine the appropriate course of action. Depending upon the circumstances, the appropriate next step may include treatment, further evaluation, referral, or submission of a Sick Call Request for follow-up.

Accordingly, the Department maintains multiple avenues for individuals to request and receive medical attention, and the process is structured to ensure that emergency concerns are addressed promptly while routine medical requests are appropriately documented, triaged, and managed through the established Sick Call process.

Chaplain/Counselor Access

“Of the 39 people we interviewed who said that they had asked to see a chaplain or counselor, 18 (46%) reported that their request was responded to within one week or less. While we didn’t ask questions about satisfaction with counselling services, several men spoke to us about it. They explained that counselors will only respond to their requests via a message on their tablet; when being seen in-person the counselor will rush them through the conversation and out of the room; or that the counselor will limit the number of in-person sessions to one every 90 days. One man reflecting on the difficulty of getting to see a counselor said, ‘I don’t even know who the counselor is!’”

It remains the Department’s expectation that Social Work Services Managers maintain a consistent and visible presence on their assigned housing units each day. Their presence is intended to ensure that individuals have regular access to Social Work staff for routine concerns, questions, and issues that can be addressed directly on the housing unit.

Individuals requiring more extensive or specialized assistance should be scheduled for office appointments, where Social Work staff can provide the appropriate level of privacy, attention, and resources necessary to address those matters effectively.

This expectation and the operational structure for maintaining an appropriate housing-unit presence will be addressed with the Human Services Administrator and RTS Administration to ensure consistency in practice and appropriate accountability for Social Work Services coverage.

Additionally, RCF has added a dedicated Islamic Chaplain to our team, expanding our Islamic services with dedicated time slots and locations weekly.

Food Services

“Of the 44 people we asked, only three (7%) said that the prison meal service provided them with enough food to eat. The majority of people we have interviewed at every PDP facility since we began asking this question in March 2023 have reported insufficient food. We have observed meals being served over one dozen times and the portions have consistently appeared to be too small.”

In response to feedback received through population surveys and discussions during Block Representative Meetings, the food service vendor conducted a review of the existing menu and negotiated revisions to address identified preferences and concerns. The revised menu was implemented effective July 1, 2026.

The daily nutritional allocation remains unchanged at 2,417 calories per day. However, the revised menu incorporates several requested updates and modifications to specific food selections and preferences. These changes reflect the Department’s ongoing effort to consider constructive feedback from the population while maintaining the established nutritional requirements and contractual standards for food service.

Law Library

“Of the 34 people we interviewed who said they had tried to access the law library, 31 (91%) said they were able to get to the library. This is a significant improvement from our December 2024 walkthrough of RCF when only 40% of people we interviewed reported being able to access the law library. Despite access to the library, men we interviewed in two different units reported that there is no librarian on-site to assist them, making it difficult to find and utilize resources. Access to law library databases is also available on the jail provided tablets, however men we spoke to explained that it can be hard to utilize the law resources on the tablets given the small screen and lack of access to a librarian to assist.”

Again, I am pleased at the positive response to this survey question regarding access to the law library. RCF currently has two inmate Law Library Workers who have been trained on the law library application and the resources available through the tablet system. They are generally available to assist the population during the hours that the law library is open and can provide guidance regarding the use of the application and available legal resources.

Additionally, RCF is exploring the expansion of this support model by training and assigning a Law Library Worker to each housing unit. These workers would be available during designated

hours to assist individuals housed on their respective units with accessing, navigating, and effectively utilizing the law library resources available through their tablets.

This approach would provide greater accessibility to legal resources while also providing individuals with on-unit assistance when they encounter difficulties navigating the system or locating available materials.

Commissary

When asked about ordering items from commissary, 30 of the 36 (83%) people who said they had ordered from commissary reported that the system worked well with timely order delivery and refunds when items were out of stock. One man said “I been waiting four months for a refund.” Other people we interviewed complained that commissary prices are too high and a lack of healthy food items to order: “it’s all salt and sugar.”

Regarding commissary, I’m pleased with the high percentage of positive responses. The PDP has an established grievance policy for commissary issues through our Contracts unit, with prompt refunds once there is documentation to support the need for a refund. We are continuously exploring healthier options for commissary orders.

Inmate Handbook

“Twenty-six of the 43 people we asked (61%) said they received a copy of the inmate handbook at some point during their stay at PDP. This is a major improvement from our prior walkthrough of RCF in December 2024 when only two percent of the men we interviewed reported receiving a copy.”

I’m glad to see a more positive response on the issue of printed Handbooks. However, all inmates who have a tablet now have continuous access to the Inmate Handbook. In practice, this has proven to be more effective than relying on printed copies. When operational changes require revisions to the Handbook, updates can be made quickly and made immediately available to the population. By contrast, printed copies that are already in circulation may not reflect the most current policies, procedures, or operational information.

Hygiene

“Seven of the 39 people we asked (18%) reported seeing rodents or cockroaches multiple times in their housing unit. This is a major improvement from our December 2024 walkthrough when 92% of people reported issues with pest control. In Commissioner Resnick’s response to our memo documenting our March 2026 walkthrough of CFCF, he stated that the PDP has begun serving meals in housing units’ common areas as opposed to cells in order to reduce the presence of rodents and cockroaches. We are happy to see that this appears to be working.”

I’m pleased to see the extreme improvement in positive responses on this issue. At RCF, the exterminator is escorted weekly by a security staff member to ensure that each plumbing chase

closet is treated and that all reported problem areas are thoroughly addressed. RCF continues to document and respond to all reports of rodents and insects.

“When asked if they have adequate access to basic hygiene products like toilet paper and soap, 21 of the 40 people we asked (52%) said that they do. Enough toilet paper and soap are not only a problem for hygiene, but also for facility safety, as in prior walkthroughs men have reported a black market for toilet paper.”

Hygiene supplies are distributed weekly, and inmates have the opportunity to request additional supplies, as needed, on a daily basis. During recent housing unit searches, staff removed excess toilet paper from many cells and returned the supplies to the unit inventory. In many instances, cells were found to contain four to five rolls of toilet paper each, demonstrating that inmates have access to sufficient supplies beyond the standard weekly distribution. Additionally, the facility has not received any recent grievances from the population reporting a lack of adequate hygiene supplies, nor have any of the Block Representatives identified the availability of hygiene supplies as an issue during recent meetings with facility leadership.

“All 40 of the people we asked (100%) reported that they are able to shower at least three days a week. Men in Unit H however reported that only four of the unit’s 16 showers were working. They explained that in a unit housing 109 men this situation can lead to long wait times and tension between people.”

At the time of the walkthrough, there were no work orders or grievances on record regarding inoperable showers on H-Unit, nor had any such issues been reported prior to receipt of this report. In response to the concern identified in the report, the maintenance vendor was asked to inspect all 16 showers on the unit. The inspection was conducted in the presence of the Housing Unit Officer and Block Representative, and the vendor reported that all 16 showers were functioning properly.

“When asked how often they are getting clean sheets, 43 out of the 44 people we asked (98%) said it was happening on a weekly basis. When asked about getting clean clothes, all 45 people we asked (100%) reported they receive clean clothes every week. They clarified however that this is because they have access to washers and dryers in their housing unit five days a week where they can do their own laundry.”

I’m very happy to see the responses to these survey questions, they reflect the dedication of RCF staff to ensure these most important services are provided.

Communications

“Of the 25 people we spoke to who said that a family member had attempted to visit them in person, ten (40%) said the visit was able to happen. Men we interviewed stated that the process of visiting was “too much hassle,” related to the incarcerated person transferring buildings and going through multiple strip-searches they found invasive. Men we interviewed also reported that families struggled with online scheduling, long wait times upon arrival at PDP, and unprofessional treatment from PDP staff resulting in missed visits.”

Without knowing the specific reasons why (4) of the (14) attempted visits did not occur, we are unable to accurately identify or address the underlying issues. There are several possible reasons a scheduled visit may not take place, including the visitor failing to provide the required documentation upon arrival, arriving late for the scheduled appointment, or not meeting the facility's dress requirements.

Additionally, social visits may be cancelled when an inmate is unavailable due to a medical appointment, court appearance, or other critical obligation. With respect to reported delays, RCF is not located in an area that allows the public to have direct access to the facility. As a result, visitors must be transported to and from the facility by van, which can contribute to delays. This transportation process is necessary to maintain the security of the facility, and, therefore, is not something that can be readily changed.

Men in RCF expressed frustration with the new PDP policy limiting family connection

"A new PDP policy limits each incarcerated person to a single list of five people they are allowed to communicate with via phone call, video call, or in-person visit. This list can only be changed once every 90 days. The men we spoke to said that they previously had a list of only five people to call but that they were allowed an unlimited number of people for video calls or in-person visits. Several men we spoke to said that the new policy made it difficult to maintain family connections, especially with elderly or remotely located family members who cannot visit in-person. One group also reported that if they want to speak with their lawyer, that uses one of their five names. We heard similar frustration with this new policy on our March 2026 walkthrough of CFCF."

This new policy was implemented as a security measure. Attorneys/official visitors are not part of the limit of (5) visitors. Each incarcerated person is entitled to (15) official visitors in addition to the (5) family/friends visitors. Further, we are in the process of expanding the family/friends visitor limit from (5) to (10) approved visitors. This process will take some time to implement and we will notify the incarcerated population when we are ready to provide a start date.

Violence

"Twelve of the 47 people we asked (75%) reported feeling safe in RCF. While this is a significant improvement from our December 2024 walkthrough, one quarter of interviewees reporting feeling unsafe is still a cause for concern. Twenty-three out of the 43 people we asked (53%) reported witnessing fights between incarcerated people in RCF."

It appears from the percentage above that you intended to state that (35) out of (47) interviewed stated that they felt safe in RCF, a 75 % percentage. I'm pleased to see that this percentage is much higher than previous surveys. Unfortunately, violent incidents do occur in correctional facilities. We have undertaken several measures to increase security, reduce violent incidents and interdict contraband, including homemade weapons.

"Twelve out of the 45 people we asked (27%) reported witnessing assault by staff. People we interviewed additionally reported that verbal abuse and provocation are common. Two men said

that staff “tell other people what you’re in for,” potentially provoking conflict between incarcerated people.”

We train our staff to respond promptly while ensuring that their response is proper within the confines of the law. We act swiftly on any allegation of staff using unnecessary or excessive force. Upon confirming evidence regarding any improper conduct by staff, action is swiftly taken to address it by way of discipline, and, potentially, referral for criminal charges. Our goal is to ensure that all inmates and staff feel safe at all PDP facilities.

RCF Administrators and Supervisors continue to regularly walk the floors of the facility and engage with both staff and inmates regarding safety and security concerns. Since the June visit, the Gymnasium has been reopened for regular activities for all housing areas each week.

Additionally, previously unoccupied rooms in several areas of the facility have been identified and cleared for use, creating additional space for programming and other constructive activities. As a result, facility Chaplains now conduct regularly scheduled gatherings in the Gymnasium and other designated program spaces, with attendance steadily increasing.

The Lending Library has also recently been expanded through the donation of more than 2,000 additional books. Additional board games and playing cards have been provided to all housing units. We are also working with our maintenance vendor to repair and repaint the housing unit recreation yards, creating additional opportunities for inmates to participate in outdoor and fresh-air activities.

We hope that these additional opportunities for constructive activity will contribute to a more focused and engaged population, while reducing idleness and, ultimately, incidents of violence.

Lights in cells

“One group of men we interviewed in Unit H reported that lights in their cells are kept on 24 hours a day and are only dimmed approximately 10% at night making it very difficult to sleep. They told us that staff control the lights, in contrast to CFCF which has light switches inside the cells, and that staff tell them that the lights are kept on “for security purposes,” without further explanation.”

Staff do not routinely control the cell lighting. Each cell is equipped with two lights within the overhead fixture. The main light is controlled by the inmate, using the light switch located on the wall. If the inmate turns off that light, staff cannot override it and turn it back on. The second light is a dim nightlight that remains illuminated at all times. This nightlight is necessary to allow officers to observe the occupants of the cells during nighttime security rounds and confirm that they are safe and responsive.

The nightlight is significantly dimmer than the main overhead light and is intended to provide only the minimal illumination necessary for nighttime observation. Accordingly, the characterization that the nightlight is only 10% dimmer than the main light is inaccurate and does not reflect the substantial difference in illumination between the two.

Recommendations

Regarding the Recommendations, I appreciate your acknowledgment that your walkthrough of RCF “showed significant improvement in several areas. Staff supervision of housing units, especially in the evenings, has greatly expanded, likely owed to the PDP’s recent success with recruitment and hiring. Most people can now access the law library, phone calls, inmate handbooks, and laundry. In addition, commissary is running well, and pest control is effective. These are impressive improvements that positively impact people’s day-to-day lives....much of it has been accomplished due to hard work by PDP staff and administration...”

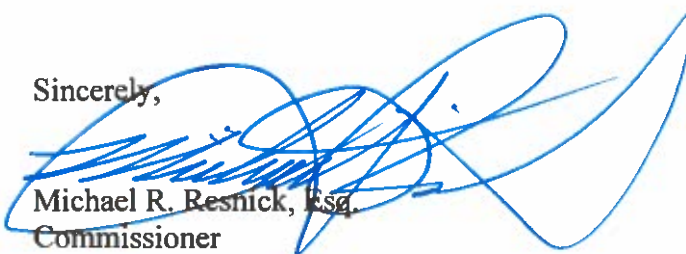
Also, you mention at the outset of your letter that the negative answers you received in your survey were consistent with previous Remick Monitoring reports, including the March 31, 2026 report. However, the March 31, 2026 (8th) report states: “Based on compliance findings, PDP achieved more progress in this reporting period than it has in any previous reporting period since monitoring commenced” and “[i]n this reporting period, PDP has shown improvement across virtually every substantive provision in the Agreement. This improvement reflects commitment and sustained effort by PDP leadership and staff.”

I have otherwise addressed the concerns you raised above.

We will continue to work on increasing staffing and making operational improvements.

In closing, I appreciate the concerns raised, and I look forward to an ongoing dialogue with you and the Pennsylvania Prison Society in addressing issues which will improve conditions for our inmate population at RCF and throughout our facilities.

Sincerely,



Michael R. Resnick, Esq.
Commissioner

cc: Carlton Williams, Managing Director
Dominick Mireles, Deputy Managing Director
Adam Geer, Public Safety Director
Brian Clinton, Chief of Staff for the Managing Director
Greg Vrato, Esq., Prisons Chief of Staff