



August 22, 2025

The [District Task Force on Jails & Justice](#) (Task Force) is issuing this statement to call on the D.C. Council, the D.C. Department of Corrections (DOC), and the Mayor's Office to create a Community Advisory Board (CAB) that would meaningfully involve the community in the future decisions in the process of planning and operating a new jail facility. Current stated plans are to seek private financing for the new facility; if this moves forward, the Task Force believes that there should be transparency and robust public participation in every step of this process.

A CAB would meet with all involved parties regularly and provide the community with a venue to be informed, advise, and actively participate in the process of jail planning. According to the [National Institute of Corrections](#), successful jail CABs routinely include a wide array of participants—such as justice-impacted individuals, community advocates, agency leaders, and elected officials—who each can provide a distinct and meaningful perspective in the design, construction, and oversight of correctional facilities.

Across the country, CABs have proven to be effective vehicles for bringing transparency to jail planning processes and for incorporating the perspectives of individuals and communities who are often excluded from policy decisions that affect them. CABs also allow for early and sustained engagement in all phases of facility planning, from design to occupancy. A well-structured CAB ensures transparency by keeping meeting agendas and minutes public, encourages open dialogue through community listening sessions, and holds jail planners accountable through timely and informed feedback. Such boards have been successfully implemented in jurisdictions including [New York City](#), [Oklahoma County](#), and [Lancaster County](#), where community representatives are actively shaping the planning and future operations of new correctional facilities.

While little is known about the plans to seek private financing for a publicly operated D.C. jail, the community has expressed concerns to the Task Force over the ramifications of privatizing construction, especially considering a lack of plan for integrating community input in future efforts to privately finance replacement jail facilities. Additionally, the Task Force has many [unaddressed concerns](#) about the plans that have been developed to date, including insufficient general population beds in Phase One; lack of access to outdoor space for recreation; and the lack of a second kitchen to improve food quality.



The jail is not the product of any one agency or contractor; it belongs to the people of D.C. The Task Force therefore asks District leaders to require that a CAB be created through legislation, administrative action, or a binding part of any private jail planning, construction or management contract to ensure the new jail is rooted in community trust and reflects the needs, values, and lived experiences of the District's most impacted communities. Doing so would not only align D.C. with national models of transparency but also send a clear message that this jail will not be imposed upon the community—it will be co-designed with them.

About the Task Force. The District Task Force on Jails & Justice is an independent advisory body founded by CCE in 2019 dedicated to redefining and reinventing our local approach to corrections, ensuring our jail is one part of a just and equitable system creating safer communities in D.C. The Task Force is committed to continuing its work to work with public officials and community members to ensure the new D.C. Jail is designed and operated in a safe and effective manner while encouraging transparency and community participation.