



## New Jersey Department of Corrections

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### **Federal Court Terminates Multiple Sections of Consent Decree as NJDOC Achieves Key Reform Milestones**

*Second Joint Motion Granted; 12 of 17 Total Sections  
Now Terminated Following Sustained Compliance*

**TRENTON, NJ** – On January 12, 2026, the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey granted a joint motion to terminate six critical sections of the federal consent decree overseeing the New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC). The order recognizes that the State has successfully implemented and sustained sweeping reforms in areas ranging from high-tech surveillance to prisoner privacy and staff training.

The motion, filed jointly by the United States Department of Justice and the State of New Jersey, marks a turning point in the oversight process that began in 2021. The Court found "good cause" to end federal monitoring in these specific areas based on the Department's documented progress.

"Today's ruling is a powerful testament to the tireless dedication of our staff and our unwavering commitment to upholding the safety and constitutional rights of every person in our care," said **Commissioner Victoria L. Kuhn, Esq.** "With 12 of the 17 sections now terminated, we have proven that these reforms are not just checklist items, but are fundamental to our daily operations. While we celebrate these milestones, we remain focused on completing our obligations and ensuring these standards serve as the permanent foundation for the NJDOC."

Since 2021, the NJDOC has undergone a comprehensive transformation to meet the rigorous standards of the Federal Monitor. Key successes cited in the motion to terminate include:

- **Modernizing Surveillance & Safety:** The Department invested \$1.6 million in a state-of-the-art camera system. Beyond hardware, the NJDOC fully implemented body-worn cameras for staff and established strict weekly inspection protocols and video retention rules to ensure accountability.
- **Enhanced Training Standards:** A new, federally approved training plan was launched, delivering trauma-informed and gender-informed instruction to custody staff, civilians, and volunteers. This includes practical, scenario-based training to ensure safety and dignity standards are applied in real-life situations.
- **Protecting Privacy & Dignity:** Physical upgrades have been completed across facilities, including the installation of privacy stalls for changing and confidential booths for legal and personal phone calls. Policies now mandate trauma-informed strip search practices and expanded "cover-up" announcements.
- **Preventing Retaliation:** To ensure a culture of safety, the NJDOC established robust monitoring systems to protect those who report sexual abuse or harassment. Ongoing education—including monthly staff newsletters and prisoner education programs—reinforces confidentiality and reporting protections.

- **Expanding Language Access:** For Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals, the NJDOC introduced new forms of identification to help staff instantly recognize language needs. The Department also ensured that all disciplinary hearings include full interpretation and translated documentation.
- **Commitment to Transparency:** The NJDOC has maintained a high standard of public accountability by holding semi-annual public meetings, publishing regular compliance reports, and maintaining full cooperation with the Federal Monitor.

On November 18, 2024, the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey granted a joint motion to terminate six substantive sections of the 2021 Consent Decree overseeing the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility. The motion ended federal oversight in areas including: Prisoner Supervision, Prisoner Education, Reporting Allegations of Sexual Assault, Response to Allegations of Sexual Assault, Physical Plant, and Implementation. This request was granted based on the facility's ability to achieve and maintain "substantial compliance" for at least one year, as verified by five separate reports from the Federal Monitor.

For more information on the Settlement Agreement and Monitor Reports can be found here:

<https://www.nj.gov/corrections/FederalMonitorReports/index.shtml>.

#### **About New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC)**

The mission of NJDOC is to advance public safety and promote successful reintegration in a dignified, safe, secure, rehabilitative, and gender-informed environment, supported by a professional, trained, and diverse workforce, enhanced by community engagement. For more information, visit: [NJDOC.gov](https://www.nj.gov/corrections).