

State of New Jersey



Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson

ANNUAL REPORT

10/01/20 to 09/30/21

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Mission, Goals, and Objectives	4-5
Operating Procedures	5
Corrections Ombudsperson's Staff	6
OCO Budget and Expenditures	6
Accomplishments	6
Inmate Contacts Aggregated to Include All Facilities	7-11
Inmate Contacts Disaggregated by State Prison Facilities	12-35
General Information, Recommendations and Systemic Issues	36-46
Future Objectives	47

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Introduction

The Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson (OCO) has successfully operated for forty-nine years. Throughout the past year, staff continued to assist people who are incarcerated, STU residents, attorneys, outside agencies, and the general public with matters relating to people in our prison system and people committed for committing sexually violent offenses.

The Department of Corrections (DOC) has an obligation to ensure that all persons committed to State Correctional Facilities and Residential Community Release Programs are provided with the custody, care, training, and treatment needed to prepare them for reintegration back into the community. Oversight by an independent body is essential to ensure the integrity of the system, administrative accountability, and to protect the rights of the incarcerated.

The Corrections Ombudsperson's role has a long and honorable tradition as a means of protecting against abuse, bias, and other improper treatment or unfairness. The Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson provides a concerned medium within which people sentenced to "State" custody can seek redress for concerns that arise during incarceration regarding their living conditions, treatment, or any allegations of maladministration or inaction by correctional authorities.

Serving as a designated neutral, the office will:

- ◆ Conduct announced and unannounced inspections of state prison facilities
- ◆ Aid in the resolution of disputes
- ◆ Make viable recommendations as needed
- ◆ Advocate for fairness
- ◆ Serve as a source of information and referral

Pursuant to mandates established by P.L.2019, c.288, this report contains information related to contacts received by this office from October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021 and is being provided to the Governor's Office, Legislature, and the Department of Corrections.

The OCO has been transformed during the past twelve months as a result of the hiring of additional staff, retirement of the Corrections Ombudsperson, institution of facility inspections, and virtual meetings with the Advisory Board as required in the new legislation. A total of 13,341 contacts were received during this reporting period and staff continued to address complaints and concerns of people who are incarcerated, their families, and other interested parties. It is noted that this figure includes a total of 262 contacts that pertain to residents housed in the Special Treatment Unit (STU) for committed sexually violent predators and 259 contacts regarding persons incarcerated in County Jail Facilities. As in the past, a separate report regarding contacts related to the residents of the STU will be provided with more detailed information. Contacts received regarding people housed in County Jails do not fall under the purview of this office unless they are state sentenced and awaiting transfer. It is noted that there was an increase in contacts from people housed in county and federal correctional facilities. This increase could be attributed to the media coverage of the OCO in the beginning of 2021, but we not have a conclusive causal assessment.

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

The composition of the OCO experienced several transitions during this time period, operating with as few as six staff for January and February of 2021. Currently, the office has eight Assistant Ombudspersons, one Sr. Management Assistant, and one Secretarial Assistant III to receive, document, and address the contacts received. The Ombudsperson position has been vacant as of April 14, 2021. Staff have continued to promote safe and secure facilities, advocate for fairness and justice, and provide the incarcerated with an opportunity to be heard while remaining fair and impartial. The office continues to seek legal guidance in an effort to be in full compliance with legislative mandates.

The OCO provides referrals, feedback and recommendations to the New Jersey Department of Corrections, University Correctional Health Care, and the Department of Human Services. In general, these agencies have been receptive and cooperative.

Mission, Goals and Objectives

Mission

- To investigate complaints, concerns or inquiries about alleged acts, omissions, improprieties and/or broader systemic issues;
- To offer options, facilitate resolutions, informally investigate or otherwise examine the concerns of people who are incarcerated and other issues independently, confidentially, and impartially;
- To investigate and make recommendations for direct action/resolution to correct situations of concern indicated by people who are incarcerated;
- To supplement, but not replace, the Department of Corrections' existing resources for conflict resolution between staff/institution/department and people who are incarcerated;
- To promote, through the independent impartial investigation process, higher standards of competence, efficiency and justice, and to ensure they are consistent with the overall mission, philosophy, and vision of the New Jersey Department of Corrections;
- Serve as a source of information on correctional issues and promote public awareness and understanding of the rights of people who are incarcerated.

Goals

- To provide a viable, responsible, and concerned medium by which the needs and problems of people who are incarcerated may be addressed;
- To work with NJDOC, University Correctional Healthcare and DHS to achieve positive resolutions for incarcerated individual and resident concerns and issues effecting the population at large;
- To promote awareness of the office and its availability to assist people who are incarcerated and residents in resolving complaints and concerns;
- To instill confidence in the incarcerated and resident population to report serious conditions occurring in correctional facilities and the Special Treatment Unit.

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Objectives

- To respond promptly, obtain and provide accurate information, deal honestly, and effectively with all individuals seeking assistance from this office;
- To maintain objectivity in all situations so that appropriate decisions can be made;
- To maintain a courteous, non-judgmental approach towards people who are incarcerated and their family members;
- To maintain high visibility within the institutions in order to afford people who are incarcerated an opportunity for necessary interviews, and to develop and maintain positive working relationships with both staff and the incarcerated;
- To ensure accountability of people who are incarcerated and staff;
- To be in compliance with current legislation.

Operating Procedures

- Friends/family members and the people who are incarcerated have access to this office via toll free numbers: 1-888-909-3244 (general public), 1-800-305-1811 (Residential Community Release Program) or 555-555-5555 (correctional facilities). Incarcerated persons may submit Request for Assistance Forms and regular correspondence through the U.S. Postal Service or institutional mail. Referrals from attorneys, advocates, and other public and state agencies are also received.
- Concerns from people who are incarcerated are addressed by conducting research, in-person interviews, telephone contacts, correspondence, and/or referrals to the appropriate staff.
- Ombudsperson's staff are required to tour housing units and congregate areas within the facilities to observe, be familiar with, and report on the living conditions.
- All contacts with people who are incarcerated are documented and recorded into a case management database that enables easy access to retrieve historical, statistical, and other pertinent information as needed.
- All communications with the office are considered to be confidential. Information gathered through investigations becomes the confidential property of the Corrections Ombudsperson. These communications and information gathered will not be released without a court order.
- Staff shall conduct both scheduled and unannounced inspections of State Correctional Facilities. The findings of the inspections are posted on the Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson's website.

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Staff

1. VACANT, Corrections Ombudsperson, Dan DiBenedetti (retired effective 6/1/2021)
2. Assistant Ombudsperson, John Blakeslee
3. Assistant Ombudsperson, Melissa Matthews
4. Assistant Ombudsperson, Megan Farrell (effective date 3/1/2021)
5. Assistant Ombudsperson, Anissa Jett, (effective date 3/1/2021)
6. Assistant Ombudsperson, Kristin King (effective date 3/1/2021)
7. Assistant Ombudsperson, Amy Southwick (effective date 3/1/2021)
8. Assistant Ombudsperson, Rachel Fromhold (effective date 8/16/2021)
9. Assistant Ombudsperson, Carla Gardner (effective dated 8/16/2021)
10. Assistant Ombudsperson, Ken Rozov (retired effective 1/1/2021)
11. Senior Management Assistant, Michelle Berry
12. Secretarial Assistant, Lauren Sagar
13. Technical Assistant, Alberto Torres (resigned effective 10/8/2021)

OCO Budget and Expenditures

CATEGORY	EXPENDITURES (FY 2021)	PROJECTED (FY 2022)
SALARIES & WAGES	*750,658.20	1,146,914.53
TRAVEL	2,953.20	5,753.00
COMMUNICATION COSTS	7,347.95	8,700.00
VEHICLES & REPAIR	**25,9832.34	6,500.00

*Fiscal year 2021 salaries fluctuated due to the retirement of three staff members and the hiring of four employees.

**FY 2021 Vehicles & Repair budget included the purchase of a new vehicle for use by OCO staff.

Accomplishments

1. Visibility within the Institutions: The office assisted in maintaining NJDOC and CDC recommendations by monitoring incarcerated individuals and staff to ensure that masks are being worn and being worn correctly to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
2. Special Assignments: Other activities included observing inmate representative elections, attending commissary committee meetings, inmate representative committee meetings, remedy system audit meeting and property claim meetings.
3. Source of Information: The office serves as an avenue for families of the people who are incarcerated and the general public to obtain information relative to the prison population and the Department of Corrections. OCO staff completed over 13,000 contacts during the twelve (12) month time period.

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

4. Inspections: OCO staff conducted fifteen (15) announced and unannounced unit inspections of correctional facilities.
5. Review of DOC Custody Staff Training: OCO staff were provided an overview of training provided to new recruits at the NJDOC Academy in Sea Girt, New Jersey. The topics covered were Use of Force, Changes to the Disciplinary Program, Strip and Pat Search Protocol, Body Camera Pilot Program, Isolated Confinement, and Gender Informed Corrections.

Contacts

The OCO fielded 13,341 contacts from the people who are incarcerated, residents of the STU, people released from prison, family/friends, advocates and attorneys. The total number of contacts to this office decreased by 1,026 from the 2019-2020 annual reporting period. On October 1, 2020, an Assistant Ombudsperson retired. A second Assistant Ombudsperson retired on January 1 2021. From January 1, 2021 through February 28, 2021, the Office consisted of one (1) Ombudsperson and two (2) Assistant Ombudspersons plus three clerical staff. The decrease in the total number of contacts can at least be partly attributed to the reduced staffing during these periods.

On March 1, 2021 four Assistant Ombudspersons began employment with the office. In mid-April 2021 the Ombudsperson went out on leave, and subsequently retired effective June 1, 2021. The loss of the Ombudsperson coupled with the training of new staff members, most likely accounts for the majority of the decrease in contacts. It should be noted that two new Assistant Ombudspersons began employment on August 16, 2021.

The number of contacts received for concerns pertaining to a particular facility should not be utilized as a tool to determine efficiency or orderly operations. The number of contacts for each facility vary based on the current population and physical plant. For example, those that are housed in dormitory style housing have easier access to the telephone; thereby making it easier for them to contact our office. Experience has also shown that younger individuals are less likely to contact this office for assistance as referenced by the lower number of contacts received from Garden State Youth Correctional Facility and William H. Fauver Youth Correctional Facility.

Statistical Summary of Contacts

13,341 - total contacts received

11,059 - contacts received pertaining to person in State Prison Facilities

1,761 - contacts received pertaining to persons in Residential Community Release Programs
and Community Assessment Center

262 - contacts received pertaining to residents in the Special Treatment Unit for committed
sexually violent predators

259 - contacts received pertaining to persons in County Jails

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Inmate Contacts Aggregated to include all State Prison Facilities, Residential Community Programs and County Jails:

Category	Category Description	Total Number of Contacts	Percentage of Total Contacts
Records	Common inquiries pertained to the calculation of the expiration of inmates' maximum sentences, requests for updates, sentencing information, and discrepancies with the application of work credits, minimum credits, jail credits, restoration of commutation time, and the overall accuracy of records.	2,096	16%
Medical	Inquiries pertained to dissatisfaction with medical treatment, delays with processing medication, delays in referrals for outside consultations, discrepancy with medical co-pays and allegations of poor treatment received from Medical Staff.	1,284	9.8%
Inmate Accounts	Common concerns pertained to the posting of inmate wages, deductions for fines and penalties, canteen order refunds, and balance transfers.	1,234	9.4%
Property	Most common contacts pertained to property transfers, lost, damaged, missing, or stolen property and/or the property claim process.	1,153	8.8%
Program	Inquires pertained to the denial or eligibility for reduced custody, community release, work assignments, visits, religious program procedures, and visit lists.	1,150	8.8
Legal Matters	Contacts pertain to court decisions, legislation, sentences, jail credits awarded, and legal actions.	1,075	8.2%
Inadequate Living Conditions	Inquiries pertained to temperatures in cells and/or housing units, blankets, mattresses, pillows, food service, clothing, hygiene items, and cell maintenance issues.	850	6.5%
JPAY	Concerns pertained to receipt of tablets, access to kiosks, inoperable applications/games, and kiosks in need of repair.	727	5.6%
Miscellaneous		573	4.4%

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Institutional Transfer Requests	Inquiries pertained to requests for inter-institutional transfers and residential community release program transfers or pending approved transfers.	459	3.5%
Parole	Inquiries pertained to requests for updated parole eligibility dates, eligibility calculations, status of hearing results and/or pending hearings. Inquiries also included inmates' dissatisfaction with the parole release and revocation hearing decisions and inability to receive response to appeals of decisions.	455	3.5%
Disciplinary	Inquires pertained to disciplinary infractions, hearings, sanctions, and appeal results.	442	3.4%
Mail		307	2.3%
Allegations of Harassment by State Employees	Contacts pertain to allegations of mistreatment by state employees.	300	2.3%
Telephone Issues	Inquiries pertain to processing and/or receipt of IPIN list, Add/Delete Requests, and GTL Telephone Discrepancy Forms.	295	2.3%
Unit Transfers		261	2.0
Allegations of Assault by State Employee		108	<1%
Mental Health		84	<1%
Dental		61	<1%
Allegations of Harassment by Inmate		64	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by State Employees		28	<1%
Allegations of Assault by Inmate		26	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by Inmate		17	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by Inmate		13	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by State Employee		9	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by Contract Staff		0	0
Allegations of Harassment by Contract Staff		8	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by Contract Staff		0	0

TOTAL	13,079
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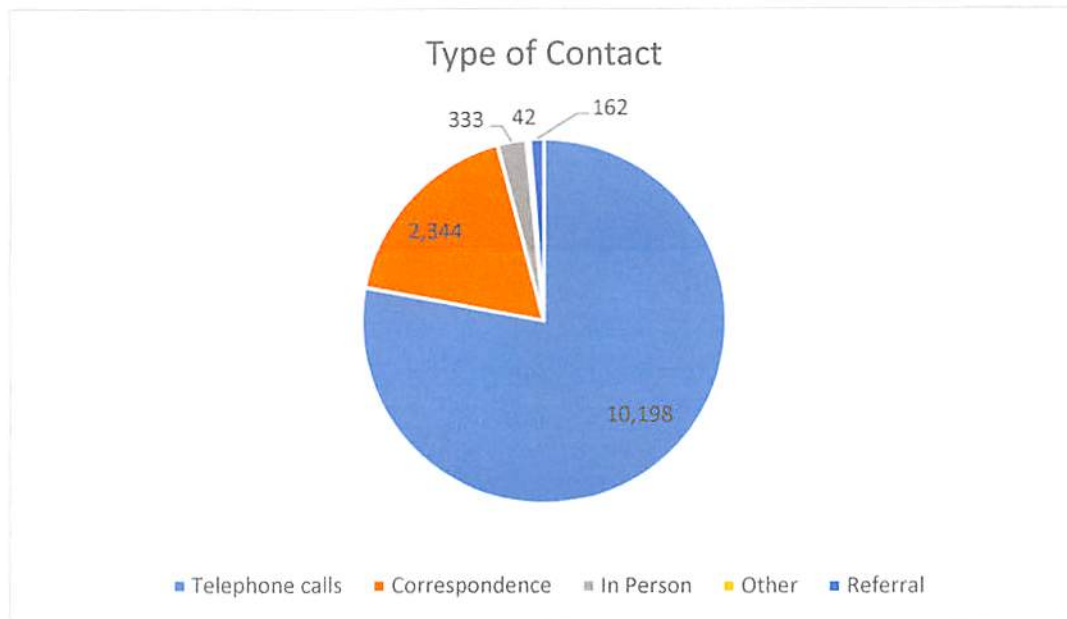
State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Contacts received by the Ombudsperson's Office

Types of contacts to this office



As you can see above, the overwhelming majority of contacts are received via telephone. Of the 10,198 calls received, 7,504 of the calls came directly from people incarcerated in state prison, residential community release programs and county jails. The remaining 2,654 calls, were received from family and/or friends of people who are incarcerated, as well as from non-profit groups, attorneys or others.

Correspondence is the next most common type of contact, with 2,344 pieces received. A total of 2,296 contacts were generated from correspondence received from people who are incarcerated. The remaining 48 pieces of correspondence came from family/friends of incarcerated persons.

In person contacts are those generated by interacting with people incarcerated within the facility. They could occur during an inspection of a facility, during a unit tour or perhaps while interviewing someone about another unrelated matter.

Referrals are contacts brought to the attention of the office by a number of different sources. Referrals from non-profit agencies accounted for 67 contacts, while the remainder were referred by the DOC, the Office of the Attorney General or the Public Defender's Office.

Other refers to any other contact to this office that does not fit within these established sources.

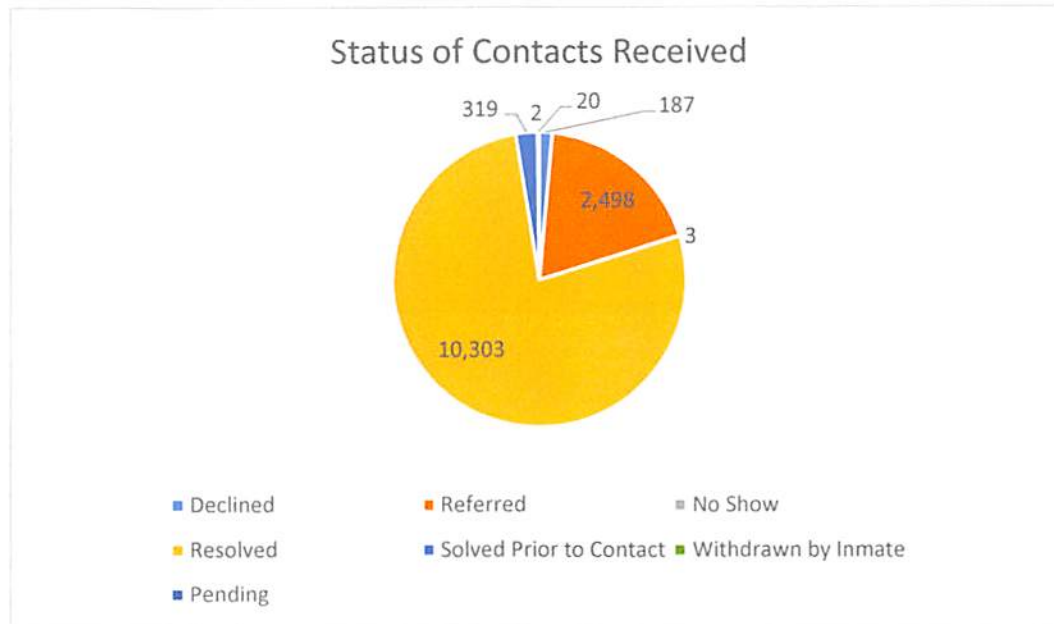
State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Contacts received by the Ombudsperson's Office

Status of all contacts received during the year



The above chart shows the disposition for the contacts received by this office during the reporting period. Of the 13,079 contacts received by this office (excluding contacts regarding residents of the Special Treatment Unit), 10,133 were resolved. This does not necessarily mean that it was resolved to the incarcerated person's satisfaction. For example, if someone were to complain that their max date was incorrect, but our investigation showed the date to be correct, that person would be notified and the contact considered to be resolved.

Contacts that were referred indicate that it was a matter that could not be addressed by this office, and was therefore referred to another agency. For example, if an incarcerated person or family member reported that an incarcerated person was not receiving their medication, the matter would be referred to the Medical staff (DOC and UCHC) for their review and resolution.

Solved Prior to Contact is self-explanatory and typically is used when correspondence is received. Often, issues will be resolved by the time the person's correspondence is received and reviewed by this office. Likewise, Withdrawn by Inmate indicates that the complaint filer followed-up with this office to request that we disregard their issue.

Declined indicates that the matter does not fall under the purview of this office; therefore, there is no cause for action.

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Inmate Contacts Disaggregated by State Prison Facilities:

Adult Diagnostic & Treatment Center Total Contacts = 112
8 Production Way
Avenel, NJ 07001

Category	Category Description	Total Number of Contacts	Percentage of Total Contacts
Records	Common inquiries pertained to the calculation of the expiration of inmates' maximum sentences, requests for updates, sentencing information, and discrepancies with the application of work credits, minimum credits, jail credits, restoration of commutation time, and the overall accuracy of records.	6	5.4%
Medical	Inquiries pertained to dissatisfaction with medical treatment, delays with processing medication, delays in referrals for outside consultations, discrepancy with medical co-pays and allegations of poor treatment received from Medical Staff.	19	17.0%
Inmate Accounts	Common concerns pertained to the posting of inmate wages, deductions for fines and penalties, canteen order refunds, and balance transfers.	14	12.5%
Property	Most common contacts pertained to property transfers, lost, damaged, missing, or stolen property and/or the property claim process.	10	9.0%
Program	Inquires pertained to the denial or eligibility for reduced custody, community release, work assignments, visits, religious program procedures, and visit lists.	10	9.0%
Legal Matters	Contacts pertain to court decisions, legislation, sentences, jail credits awarded, and legal actions.	19	17%
Inadequate Living Conditions	Inquiries pertained to temperatures in cells and/or housing units, blankets, mattresses, pillows, food service, clothing, hygiene items, and cell maintenance issues.	4	3.6%
JPAY	Concerns pertained to receipt of tablets, access to kiosks, inoperable applications/games, and kiosks in need of repair.	6	5.4%
Miscellaneous		4	3.6%

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Institutional Transfer Requests	Inquiries pertained to requests for inter-institutional transfers and residential community release program transfers or pending approved transfers.	1	<1%
Parole	Inquiries pertained to requests for updated parole eligibility dates, eligibility calculations, status of hearing results and/or pending hearings. Inquiries also included inmates' dissatisfaction with the parole release and revocation hearing decisions and inability to receive response to appeals of decisions.	3	2.7%
Disciplinary	Inquires pertained to disciplinary infractions, hearings, sanctions, and appeal results.	0	0%
Mail		4	3.6%
Allegation of Harassment by State Employees	Contacts pertain to allegations of mistreatment by state employees.	8	7.1%
Telephone Issues	Inquiries pertain to processing and/or receipt of IPIN list, Add/Delete Requests, and GTL Telephone Discrepancy Forms.	2	1.8%
Unit Transfers		1	<1%
Allegations of Assault by State Employee		0	0%
Mental Health		0	0%
Dental		0	0%
Allegations of Harassment by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by State Employees		1	<1%
Allegations of Assault by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by State Employee		0	0%
Allegations of Harassment by Contract Staff		0	0%
TOTAL		112	

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Bayside State Prison Total Contacts = 455
4293 Route 47
Leesburg, NJ 08327

Category	Category Description	Total Number of Contacts	Percentage of Total Contacts
Records	Common inquiries pertained to the calculation of the expiration of inmates' maximum sentences, requests for updates, sentencing information, and discrepancies with the application of work credits, minimum credits, jail credits, restoration of commutation time, and the overall accuracy of records.	49	10.8%
Medical	Inquiries pertained to dissatisfaction with medical treatment, delays with processing medication, delays in referrals for outside consultations, discrepancy with medical co-pays and allegations of poor treatment received from Medical Staff.	23	5.1%
Inmate Accounts	Common concerns pertained to the posting of inmate wages, deductions for fines and penalties, canteen order refunds, and balance transfers.	35	7.7%
Property	Most common contacts pertained to property transfers, lost, damaged, missing, or stolen property and/or the property claim process.	71	15.6%
Program	Inquires pertained to the denial or eligibility for reduced custody, community release, work assignments, visits, religious program procedures, and visit lists.	62	13.6%
Legal Matters	Contacts pertain to court decisions, legislation, sentences, jail credits awarded, and legal actions.	23	5.1%
Inadequate Living Conditions	Inquiries pertained to temperatures in cells and/or housing units, blankets, mattresses, pillows, food service, clothing, hygiene items, and cell maintenance issues.	41	3.1%
JPAY	Concerns pertained to receipt of tablets, access to kiosks, inoperable applications/games, and kiosks in need of repair.	39	8.6%
Miscellaneous		16	3.5%

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Institutional Transfer Requests	Inquiries pertained to requests for inter-institutional transfers and residential community release program transfers or pending approved transfers.	14	3.8%
Parole	Inquiries pertained to requests for updated parole eligibility dates, eligibility calculations, status of hearing results and/or pending hearings. Inquiries also included inmates' dissatisfaction with the parole release and revocation hearing decisions and inability to receive response to appeals of decisions.	9	2.0%
Disciplinary	Inquires pertained to disciplinary infractions, hearings, sanctions, and appeal results.	14	3.8%
Mail		3	<1%
Allegations of Harassment by State Employees	Contacts pertain to allegations of mistreatment by state employees.	16	3.5%
Telephone Issues	Inquiries pertain to processing and/or receipt of IPIN list, Add/Delete Requests, and GTL Telephone Discrepancy Forms.	9	2.0%
Unit Transfers		17	3.7%
Allegations of Assault by State Employee		5	1.1%
Mental Health		4	<1%
Dental		1	<1%
Allegations of Harassment by Inmate		3	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by State Employees		0	0%
Allegations of Assault by Inmate		1	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by State Employee		0	0%
Allegations of Harassment by Contract Staff		0	0%
TOTAL		455	

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Central Reception & Assignment Facility Total contacts = 209

Stuyvesant Avenue

Trenton, NJ 08628

FACILITY CLOSED IN JANUARY OF 2021

Category	Category Description	Total Number of Contacts	Percentage of Total Contacts
Records	Common inquiries pertained to the calculation of the expiration of inmates' maximum sentences, requests for updates, sentencing information, and discrepancies with the application of work credits, minimum credits, jail credits, restoration of commutation time, and the overall accuracy of records.	59	28.2%
Medical	Inquiries pertained to dissatisfaction with medical treatment, delays with processing medication, delays in referrals for outside consultations, discrepancy with medical co-pays and allegations of poor treatment received from Medical Staff.	24	11.5%
Inmate Accounts	Common concerns pertained to the posting of inmate wages, deductions for fines and penalties, canteen order refunds, and balance transfers.	22	10.5%
Property	Most common contacts pertained to property transfers, lost, damaged, missing, or stolen property and/or the property claim process.	14	6.7%
Program	Inquires pertained to the denial or eligibility for reduced custody, community release, work assignments, visits, religious program procedures, and visit lists.	4	1.9%
Legal Matters	Contacts pertain to court decisions, legislation, sentences, jail credits awarded, and legal actions.	13	6.2%
Inadequate Living Conditions	Inquiries pertained to temperatures in cells and/or housing units, blankets, mattresses, pillows, food service, clothing, hygiene items, and cell maintenance issues.	12	5.7%
JPAY	Concerns pertained to receipt of tablets, access to kiosks, inoperable applications/games, and kiosks in need of repair.	6	2.9%
Miscellaneous		4	1.9%

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Institutional Transfer Requests	Inquiries pertained to requests for inter-institutional transfers and residential community release program transfers or pending approved transfers.	6	2.9%
Parole	Inquiries pertained to requests for updated parole eligibility dates, eligibility calculations, status of hearing results and/or pending hearings. Inquiries also included inmates' dissatisfaction with the parole release and revocation hearing decisions and inability to receive response to appeals of decisions.	28	13.4%
Disciplinary	Inquires pertained to disciplinary infractions, hearings, sanctions, and appeal results.	1	<1%
Mail		0	0%
Allegations of Harassment By State Employees	Contacts pertain to allegations of mistreatment by state employees.	0	0%
Telephone Issues	Inquiries pertain to processing and/or receipt of IPIN list, Add/Delete Requests, and GTL Telephone Discrepancy Forms.	1	<1%
Unit Transfers		10	4.8%
Allegations of Assault by State Employee		2	<1%
Mental Health		0	0%
Dental		0	0%
Allegations of Harassment by Inmate		2	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by State Employees		0	0%
Allegations of Assault by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by Inmate		0	0%
		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by State Employee		1	<1%
Allegations of Harassment by Contract Staff		0	0%

TOTAL	209
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State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

East Jersey State Prison Total contacts = 487

Rahway Avenue

Woodbridge, NJ 07065

Category	Category Description	Total Number of Contacts	Percentage of Total Contacts
Records	Common inquiries pertained to the calculation of the expiration of inmates' maximum sentences, requests for updates, sentencing information, and discrepancies with the application of work credits, minimum credits, jail credits, restoration of commutation time, and the overall accuracy of records.	56	11.5%
Medical	Inquiries pertained to dissatisfaction with medical treatment, delays with processing medication, delays in referrals for outside consultations, discrepancy with medical co-pays and allegations of poor treatment received from Medical Staff.	57	11.7%
Inmate Accounts	Common concerns pertained to the posting of inmate wages, deductions for fines and penalties, canteen order refunds, and balance transfers.	74	15.2%
Property	Most common contacts pertained to property transfers, lost, damaged, missing, or stolen property and/or the property claim process.	41	8.4%
Program	Inquires pertained to the denial or eligibility for reduced custody, community release, work assignments, visits, religious program procedures, and visit lists.	39	8.0%
Legal Matters	Contacts pertain to court decisions, legislation, sentences, jail credits awarded, and legal actions.	29	6.0%
Inadequate Living Conditions	Inquiries pertained to temperatures in cells and/or housing units, blankets, mattresses, pillows, food service, clothing, hygiene items, and cell maintenance issues.	34	7.0%
JPAY	Concerns pertained to receipt of tablets, access to kiosks, inoperable applications/games, and kiosks in need of repair.	41	8.4%
Miscellaneous		23	4.7%

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Institutional Transfer Requests	Inquiries pertained to requests for inter-institutional transfers and residential community release program transfers or pending approved transfers.	17	3.5%
Parole	Inquiries pertained to requests for updated parole eligibility dates, eligibility calculations, status of hearing results and/or pending hearings. Inquiries also included inmates' dissatisfaction with the parole release and revocation hearing decisions and inability to receive response to appeals of decisions.	11	2.3%
Disciplinary		18	3.7%
Mail		8	1.6%
Allegations of Harassment by State Employees	Contacts pertain to allegations of mistreatment by state employees.	7	1.4%
Telephone Issues	Inquiries pertain to processing and/or receipt of IPIN list, Add/Delete Requests, and GTL Telephone Discrepancy Forms.	22	4.5%
Unit Transfers		4	<1%
Allegations of Assault by State Employee		2	<1%
Mental Health		0	0%
Dental		1	<1%
Allegations of Harassment by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by State Employees		2	<1%
Allegations of Assault by Inmate		1	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by State Employee		0	0%
Allegations of Harassment by Contract Staff		0	0%
TOTAL		487	

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women Total contacts = 936
30 County Route 513
Clinton, NJ 08809

Category	Category Description	Total Number of Contacts	Percentage of Total Contacts
Records	Common inquiries pertained to the calculation of the expiration of inmates' maximum sentences, requests for updates, sentencing information, and discrepancies with the application of work credits, minimum credits, jail credits, restoration of commutation time, and the overall accuracy of records.	27	2.9%
Medical	Inquiries pertained to dissatisfaction with medical treatment, delays with processing medication, delays in referrals for outside consultations, discrepancy with medical co-pays and allegations of poor treatment received from Medical Staff.	166	17.7%
Inmate Accounts	Common concerns pertained to the posting of inmate wages, deductions for fines and penalties, canteen order refunds, and balance transfers.	49	5.2%
Property	Most common contacts pertained to property transfers, lost, damaged, missing, or stolen property and/or the property claim process.	34	3.6%
Program	Inquires pertained to the denial or eligibility for reduced custody, community release, work assignments, visits, religious program procedures, and visit lists.	74	7.9%
Legal Matters	Contacts pertain to court decisions, legislation, sentences, jail credits awarded, and legal actions.	34	3.6%
Inadequate Living Conditions	Inquiries pertained to temperatures in cells and/or housing units, blankets, mattresses, pillows, food service, clothing, hygiene items, and cell maintenance issues.	162	17.3%
JPAY	Concerns pertained to receipt of tablets, access to kiosks, inoperable applications/games, and kiosks in need of repair.	20	2.1
Miscellaneous		78	8.3%

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Institutional Transfer Requests	Inquiries pertained to requests for inter-institutional transfers and residential community release program transfers or pending approved transfers.	12	1.3%
Parole	Inquiries pertained to requests for updated parole eligibility dates, eligibility calculations, status of hearing results and/or pending hearings. Inquiries also included inmates' dissatisfaction with the parole release and revocation hearing decisions and inability to receive response to appeals of decisions.	11	1.2%
Disciplinary		41	4.4%
Mail		14	1.5%
Allegations of Harassment by State Employees	Contacts pertain to allegations of mistreatment by state employees.	47	5.0%
Telephone Issues	Inquiries pertain to processing and/or receipt of IPIN list, Add/Delete Requests, and GTL Telephone Discrepancy Forms.	8	<1%
Unit Transfers		61	6.5%
Allegations of Assault by State Employee		21	2.2%
Mental Health		19	2.0%
Dental		5	<1%
Allegations of Harassment by Inmate		47	5.0%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by State Employees		5	<1%
Allegations of Assault by Inmate		4	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by Inmate		32	3.4%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by Inmate		1	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by State Employee		2	<1%
Allegations of Harassment by Contract Staff		1	<1%
TOTAL		936	

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Garden State Youth Correctional Facility Total contacts = 574

Highbridge Road
Yardville, NJ 08620

Category	Category Description	Total Number of Contacts	Percentage of Total Contacts
Records	Common inquiries pertained to the calculation of the expiration of inmates' maximum sentences, requests for updates, sentencing information, and discrepancies with the application of work credits, minimum credits, jail credits, restoration of commutation time, and the overall accuracy of records.	114	19.9%
Medical	Inquiries pertained to dissatisfaction with medical treatment, delays with processing medication, delays in referrals for outside consultations, discrepancy with medical co-pays and allegations of poor treatment received from Medical Staff.	26	4.5%
Inmate Accounts	Common concerns pertained to the posting of inmate wages, deductions for fines and penalties, canteen order refunds, and balance transfers.	57	10.0%
Property	Most common contacts pertained to property transfers, lost, damaged, missing, or stolen property and/or the property claim process.	53	9.2%
Program	Inquires pertained to the denial or eligibility for reduced custody, community release, work assignments, visits, religious program procedures, and visit lists.	27	4.7%
Legal Matters	Contacts pertain to court decisions, legislation, sentences, jail credits awarded, and legal actions.	38	6.6%
Inadequate Living Conditions	Inquiries pertained to temperatures in cells and/or housing units, blankets, mattresses, pillows, food service, clothing, hygiene items, and cell maintenance issues.	48	8.4%
JPAY	Concerns pertained to receipt of tablets, access to kiosks, inoperable applications/games, and kiosks in need of repair.	19	3.3%
Miscellaneous		35	6.1%

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Institutional Transfer Requests	Inquiries pertained to requests for inter-institutional transfers and residential community release program transfers or pending approved transfers.	49	8.5%
Parole	Inquiries pertained to requests for updated parole eligibility dates, eligibility calculations, status of hearing results and/or pending hearings. Inquiries also included inmates' dissatisfaction with the parole release and revocation hearing decisions and inability to receive response to appeals of decisions.	17	3.0%
Disciplinary		22	3.8%
Mail		8	1.4%
Allegations of Harassment by State Employees	Contacts pertain to allegations of mistreatment by state employees.	12	2.1%
Telephone Issues	Inquiries pertain to processing and/or receipt of IPIN list, Add/Delete Requests, and GTL Telephone Discrepancy Forms.	28	10.1%
Unit Transfers		9	1.6%
Allegations of Assault by State Employee		7	1.2%
Mental Health		2	<1%
Dental		0	0%
Allegations of Harassment by Inmate		2	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by State Employees		0	0%
Allegations of Assault by Inmate		1	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by State Employee		0	0%
Allegations of Harassment by Contract Staff		0	0%

TOTAL	574
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State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Mid-State Correctional Facility Total contacts = 176
Range Road
Fort Dix, NJ 08562

Category	Category Description	Total Number of Contacts	Percentage of Total Contacts
Records	Common inquiries pertained to the calculation of the expiration of inmates' maximum sentences, requests for updates, sentencing information, and discrepancies with the application of work credits, minimum credits, jail credits, restoration of commutation time, and the overall accuracy of records.	9	5.1%
Medical	Inquiries pertained to dissatisfaction with medical treatment, delays with processing medication, delays in referrals for outside consultations, discrepancy with medical co-pays and allegations of poor treatment received from Medical Staff.	27	15.3%
Inmate Accounts	Common concerns pertained to the posting of inmate wages, deductions for fines and penalties, canteen order refunds, and balance transfers.	10	5.7%
Property	Most common contacts pertained to property transfers, lost, damaged, missing, or stolen property and/or the property claim process.	34	19.3%
Program	Inquires pertained to the denial or eligibility for reduced custody, community release, work assignments, visits, religious program procedures, and visit lists.	12	6.8%
Legal Matters	Contacts pertain to court decisions, legislation, sentences, jail credits awarded, and legal actions.	4	2.3%
Inadequate Living Conditions	Inquiries pertained to temperatures in cells and/or housing units, blankets, mattresses, pillows, food service, clothing, hygiene items, and cell maintenance issues.	6	3.4%
JPAY	Concerns pertained to receipt of tablets, access to kiosks, inoperable applications/games, and kiosks in need of repair.	16	9.1%
Miscellaneous		9	5.1%

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Institutional Transfer Requests	Inquiries pertained to requests for inter-institutional transfers and residential community release program transfers or pending approved transfers.	6	3.4%
Parole	Inquiries pertained to requests for updated parole eligibility dates, eligibility calculations, status of hearing results and/or pending hearings. Inquiries also included inmates' dissatisfaction with the parole release and revocation hearing decisions and inability to receive response to appeals of decisions.	2	1.1%
Disciplinary		16	9.1%
Mail		7	4.0%
Allegations of Harassment by State Employees	Contacts pertain to allegations of mistreatment by state employees.	4	2.3%
Telephone Issues	Inquiries pertain to processing and/or receipt of IPIN list, Add/Delete Requests, and GTL Telephone Discrepancy Forms.	5	2.8%
Unit Transfers		5	2.8%
Allegations of Assault by State Employee		2	1.1%
Mental Health		1	<1%
Dental		1	<1%
Allegations of Harassment by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by State Employees		0	0%
Allegations of Assault by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by State Employee		0	0%
Allegations of Harassment by Contract Staff		0	0%

TOTAL	176
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State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

New Jersey State Prison
Cass and Federal Streets
Trenton, NJ 08625

Total contacts = 1930

Category	Category Description	Total Number of Contacts	Percentage of Total Contacts
Records	Common inquiries pertained to the calculation of the expiration of inmates' maximum sentences, requests for updates, sentencing information, and discrepancies with the application of work credits, minimum credits, jail credits, restoration of commutation time, and the overall accuracy of records.	117	6.1%
Medical	Inquiries pertained to dissatisfaction with medical treatment, delays with processing medication, delays in referrals for outside consultations, discrepancy with medical co-pays and allegations of poor treatment received from Medical Staff.	226	11.7%
Inmate Accounts	Common concerns pertained to the posting of inmate wages, deductions for fines and penalties, canteen order refunds, and balance transfers.	202	10.5%
Property	Most common contacts pertained to property transfers, lost, damaged, missing, or stolen property and/or the property claim process.	240	12.4%
Program	Inquires pertained to the denial or eligibility for reduced custody, community release, work assignments, visits, religious program procedures, and visit lists.	103	5.3%
Legal Matters	Contacts pertain to court decisions, legislation, sentences, jail credits awarded, and legal actions.	120	6.2%
Inadequate Living Conditions	Inquiries pertained to temperatures in cells and/or housing units, blankets, mattresses, pillows, food service, clothing, hygiene items, and cell maintenance issues.	113	5.9%
JPAY	Concerns pertained to receipt of tablets, access to kiosks, inoperable applications/games, and kiosks in need of repair.	231	12.0%
Miscellaneous		142	7.4%

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Institutional Transfer Requests	Inquiries pertained to requests for inter-institutional transfers and residential community release program transfers or pending approved transfers.	26	1.3%
Parole	Inquiries pertained to requests for updated parole eligibility dates, eligibility calculations, status of hearing results and/or pending hearings. Inquiries also included inmates' dissatisfaction with the parole release and revocation hearing decisions and inability to receive response to appeals of decisions.	20	1.0%
Disciplinary		50	2.6
Mail		110	5.7%
Allegations of Harassment by State Employees	Contacts pertain to allegations of mistreatment by state employees.	58	3.0%
Telephone Issues	Inquiries pertain to processing and/or receipt of IPIN list, Add/Delete Requests, and GTL Telephone Discrepancy Forms.	85	4.4%
Unit Transfers		23	1.2%
Allegations of Assault by State Employee		19	<1%
Mental Health		14	<1%
Dental		16	<1%
Allegations of Harassment by Inmate		4	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by State Employees		3	<1%
Allegations of Assault by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by Inmate		2	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by Inmate		1	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by State Employee		4	<1%
Allegations of Harassment by Contract Staff		1	<1%
TOTAL		1,930	

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Northern State Prison Total contacts = 2572
168 Frontage Road
Newark, NJ 07114

Category	Category Description	Total Number of Contacts	Percentage of Total Contacts
Records	Common inquiries pertained to the calculation of the expiration of inmates' maximum sentences, requests for updates, sentencing information, and discrepancies with the application of work credits, minimum credits, jail credits, restoration of commutation time, and the overall accuracy of records.	408	15.9%
Medical	Inquiries pertained to dissatisfaction with medical treatment, delays with processing medication, delays in referrals for outside consultations, discrepancy with medical co-pays and allegations of poor treatment received from Medical Staff.	238	9.3%
Inmate Accounts	Common concerns pertained to the posting of inmate wages, deductions for fines and penalties, canteen order refunds, and balance transfers.	318	12.4%
Property	Most common contacts pertained to property transfers, lost, damaged, missing, or stolen property and/or the property claim process.	176	6.8%
Program	Inquires pertained to the denial or eligibility for reduced custody, community release, work assignments, visits, religious program procedures, and visit lists.	257	10.0%
Legal Matters	Contacts pertain to court decisions, legislation, sentences, jail credits awarded, and legal actions.	198	7.7%
Inadequate Living Conditions	Inquiries pertained to temperatures in cells and/or housing units, blankets, mattresses, pillows, food service, clothing, hygiene items, and cell maintenance issues.	145	5.6%
JPAY	Concerns pertained to receipt of tablets, access to kiosks, inoperable applications/games, and kiosks in need of repair.	116	4.5%
Miscellaneous		84	3.3%

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Institutional Transfer Requests	Inquiries pertained to requests for inter-institutional transfers and residential community release program transfers or pending approved transfers.	108	4.2%
Parole	Inquiries pertained to requests for updated parole eligibility dates, eligibility calculations, status of hearing results and/or pending hearings. Inquiries also included inmates' dissatisfaction with the parole release and revocation hearing decisions and inability to receive response to appeals of decisions.	77	3.0%
Disciplinary		136	5.3%
Mail		60	2.3%
Allegations of Harassment by State Employees	Contacts pertain to allegations of mistreatment by state employees.	41	1.6%
Telephone Issues	Inquiries pertain to processing and/or receipt of IPIN list, Add/Delete Requests, and GTL Telephone Discrepancy Forms.	46	1.8%
Unit Transfers		71	2.8%
Allegations of Assault by State Employee		22	<1%
Mental Health		25	<1
Dental		11	<1%
Allegations of Harassment by Inmate		8	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by State Employees		9	<1%
Allegations of Assault by Inmate		10	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by Inmate		4	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by State Employee		1	<1%

TOTAL	2,572
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State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

South Woods State Prison
215 South Burlington Road
Bridgeton, NJ 08302

Total Contacts = 2613

Category	Category Description	Total Number of Contacts	Percentage of Total Contacts
Records	Common inquiries pertained to the calculation of the expiration of inmates' maximum sentences, requests for updates, sentencing information, and discrepancies with the application of work credits, minimum credits, jail credits, restoration of commutation time, and the overall accuracy of records.	340	13.0%
Medical	Inquiries pertained to dissatisfaction with medical treatment, delays with processing medication, delays in referrals for outside consultations, discrepancy with medical co-pays and allegations of poor treatment received from Medical Staff.	325	12.4%
Inmate Accounts	Common concerns pertained to the posting of inmate wages, deductions for fines and penalties, canteen order refunds, and balance transfers.	172	6.6%
Property	Most common contacts pertained to property transfers, lost, damaged, missing, or stolen property and/or the property claim process.	297	11.4%
Program	Inquires pertained to the denial or eligibility for reduced custody, community release, work assignments, visits, religious program procedures, and visit lists.	281	10.8%
Legal Matters	Contacts pertain to court decisions, legislation, sentences, jail credits awarded, and legal actions.	189	7.2%
Inadequate Living Conditions	Inquiries pertained to temperatures in cells and/or housing units, blankets, mattresses, pillows, food service, clothing, hygiene items, and cell maintenance issues.	161	6.2%
JPAY	Concerns pertained to receipt of tablets, access to kiosks, inoperable applications/games, and kiosks in need of repair.	181	6.9%
Miscellaneous		95	3.6%

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Institutional Transfer Requests	Inquiries pertained to requests for inter-institutional transfers and residential community release program transfers or pending approved transfers.	124	4.7%
Parole	Inquiries pertained to requests for updated parole eligibility dates, eligibility calculations, status of hearing results and/or pending hearings. Inquiries also included inmates' dissatisfaction with the parole release and revocation hearing decisions and inability to receive response to appeals of decisions.	57	2.2%
Disciplinary		80	3.1%
Mail		57	2.2%
Allegations of Harassment by State Employees	Contacts pertain to allegations of mistreatment by state employees.	78	3.0%
Telephone Issues	Inquiries pertain to processing and/or receipt of IPIN list, Add/Delete Requests, and GTL Telephone Discrepancy Forms.	54	2.1%
Unit Transfers		37	1.4%
Allegations of Assault by State Employee		16	<1%
Mental Health		15	<1%
Dental		16	<1%
Allegations of Harassment by Inmate		13	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by State Employees		6	<1%
Allegations of Assault by Inmate		9	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by Inmate		7	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by Inmate		1	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by State Employee		2	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by Contract Staff		0	0%

TOTAL	2,613
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State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Southern State Correctional Facility Total Contacts = 969
4295 Route 47
Delmont, NJ 08302

Category	Category Description	Total Number of Contacts	Percentage of Total Contacts
Records	Common inquiries pertained to the calculation of the expiration of inmates' maximum sentences, requests for updates, sentencing information, and discrepancies with the application of work credits, minimum credits, jail credits, restoration of commutation time, and the overall accuracy of records.	197	20.3%
Medical	Inquiries pertained to dissatisfaction with medical treatment, delays with processing medication, delays in referrals for outside consultations, discrepancy with medical co-pays and allegations of poor treatment received from Medical Staff.	78	8.0%
Inmate Accounts	Common concerns pertained to the posting of inmate wages, deductions for fines and penalties, canteen order refunds, and balance transfers.	68	7.0%
Property	Most common contacts pertained to property transfers, lost, damaged, missing, or stolen property and/or the property claim process.	75	7.7%
Program	Inquires pertained to the denial or eligibility for reduced custody, community release, work assignments, visits, religious program procedures, and visit lists.	191	19.7%
Legal Matters	Contacts pertain to court decisions, legislation, sentences, jail credits awarded, and legal actions.	67	6.9%
Inadequate Living Conditions	Inquiries pertained to temperatures in cells and/or housing units, blankets, mattresses, pillows, food service, clothing, hygiene items, and cell maintenance issues.	22	2.3%
JPAY	Concerns pertained to receipt of tablets, access to kiosks, inoperable applications/games, and kiosks in need of repair.	47	4.9%
Miscellaneous		24	2.5%

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Institutional Transfer Requests	Inquiries pertained to requests for inter-institutional transfers and residential community release program transfers or pending approved transfers.	32	3.3%
Parole	Inquiries pertained to requests for updated parole eligibility dates, eligibility calculations, status of hearing results and/or pending hearings. Inquiries also included inmates' dissatisfaction with the parole release and revocation hearing decisions and inability to receive response to appeals of decisions.	30	3.1%
Disciplinary		27	2.8%
Mail		26	2.7%
Allegations of Harassment by State Employees	Contacts pertain to allegations of mistreatment by state employees.	24	2.5%
Telephone Issues	Inquiries pertain to processing and/or receipt of IPIN list, Add/Delete Requests, and GTL Telephone Discrepancy Forms.	24	2.5%
Unit Transfers		21	2.2%
Allegations of Assault by State Employee		3	<1%
Mental Health		2	<1%
Dental		6	<1%
Allegations of Harassment by Inmate		1	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by State Employees		2	<1%
Allegations of Assault by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by Inmate		2	<1%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by State Employee		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by Contract Staff		0	0%

TOTAL	969
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State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

William H. Fauver Youth Correctional Facility Total Contacts = 26

31 Petticoat Lane

Annandale, NJ 08801

FACILITY DEPOPULATED IN SEPTEMBER OF 2021

Category	Category Description	Total Number of Contacts	Percentage of Total Contacts
Records	Common inquiries pertained to the calculation of the expiration of inmates' maximum sentences, requests for updates, sentencing information, and discrepancies with the application of work credits, minimum credits, jail credits, restoration of commutation time, and the overall accuracy of records.	2	7.7%
Medical	Inquiries pertained to dissatisfaction with medical treatment, delays with processing medication, delays in referrals for outside consultations, discrepancy with medical co-pays and allegations of poor treatment received from Medical Staff.	1	3.8%
Inmate Accounts	Common concerns pertained to the posting of inmate wages, deductions for fines and penalties, canteen order refunds, and balance transfers.	6	23.1%
Property	Most common contacts pertained to property transfers, lost, damaged, missing, or stolen property and/or the property claim process.	5	19.2%
Program	Inquires pertained to the denial or eligibility for reduced custody, community release, work assignments, visits, religious program procedures, and visit lists.	0	0%
Legal Matters	Contacts pertain to court decisions, legislation, sentences, jail credits awarded, and legal actions.	4	15.4%
Inadequate Living Conditions	Inquiries pertained to temperatures in cells and/or housing units, blankets, mattresses, pillows, food service, clothing, hygiene items, and cell maintenance issues.	1	3.8%
JPAY	Concerns pertained to receipt of tablets, access to kiosks, inoperable applications/games, and kiosks in need of repair.	0	0%
Miscellaneous		2	7.7%

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Institutional Transfer Requests	Inquiries pertained to requests for inter-institutional transfers and residential community release program transfers or pending approved transfers.	0	0%
Parole	Inquiries pertained to requests for updated parole eligibility dates, eligibility calculations, status of hearing results and/or pending hearings. Inquiries also included inmates' dissatisfaction with the parole release and revocation hearing decisions and inability to receive response to appeals of decisions.	2	7.7%
Disciplinary		3	11.5%
Mail		0	0%
Allegations of Harassment by State Employees	Contacts pertain to allegations of mistreatment by state employees.	0	0%
Telephone Issues	Inquiries pertain to processing and/or receipt of IPIN list, Add/Delete Requests, and GTL Telephone Discrepancy Forms.	0	0%
Unit Transfers		0	0%
Allegations of Assault by State Employee		0	0%
Mental Health		0	0%
Dental		0	0%
Allegations of Harassment by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by State Employees		0	0%
Allegations of Assault by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by Inmate		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Assault by State Employee		0	0%
Allegations of Sexual Harassment by Contract Staff		0	0%
TOTAL		26	

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

General Information, Recommendations, Review of Systemic Issues

Repetitive contacts for similar concerns are utilized to identify systemic issues that affect the greatest number of people. Matters of this nature are addressed accordingly with the appropriate staff and monitored to determine viable recommendations and possible solutions to achieve a satisfactory outcome.

Administrative Segregation / Restorative Housing Unit

On July 11, 2019, Governor Murphy signed the Isolated Confinement Restriction Act, which went into effect on August 1, 2020. Isolated Confinement is defined as confinement in a cell, alone or with other persons, for approximately 20 hours or more per day in a State correctional facility, with severely restricted activity, movement, and social interaction.

With regard to isolated confinement, the law states it should only be used when necessary and should not be used against vulnerable populations. For purposes of this law, vulnerable populations includes prisoners age 21 years old or younger; age 65 or older; who have a mental illness, developmental disability, or serious medical condition; who are pregnant or postpartum; who have a significant auditory or visual impairment; or who are perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex. It prohibits isolated confinement under conditions for time periods that foster psychological trauma, psychiatric disorders, or serious, long-term damage to the prisoner's brain. The law provides that confinement may not be for more than 20 consecutive days or more than 30 days in a 60-day period, allowing for individuals to be out of cell for a minimum of four hours per day.

As indicated in the 2019-2020 annual report, it is difficult to evaluate the changes to the Restorative Housing Unit due to limited access to programs as the health risks associated with COVID-19 have not significantly reduced in the last year. Programming remains limited for the population. OCO has received a small number of calls regarding the lack of programming and out of cell time for those housed in a Restorative Housing unit. Although we agree that the law is clear, implementation of the Act to allow persons out of their cells for four hours a day has been extremely problematic during a global pandemic. This office will take a more active role in monitoring facilities for compliance with the Isolated Confinement Act when COVID-19 restrictions are greatly reduced or eliminated.

JPAY

JPay is a private company owned by Securus Technologies that is contracted by the New Jersey Department of Corrections (DOC) to provide services to the population. The services include money transfers, emails and video grams. Incarcerated persons are able to purchase hand held tablets that allow them to download and play music/games/books, listen to the radio, store photos and read and draft emails. Additionally, they are able to file electronic complaints via an Inmate Remedy System that can be accessed through the JPay Kiosk.

Over the years this office has received many complaints regarding JPay tablets and kiosks. During the last nine (9) months, the number of complaints were six hundred and sixty-seven (667). The majority of these complaints, from January 2021 to September 2021, were regarding missing tablets, request for refunds and password issues. The main complaint was the lack of JP5 tablets for distribution. From approximately October 2020, there were limited JP5 tablets to distribute. If

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

someone ordered a JP5 tablet and did not receive one, they had to request a credit to their media accounts. People are asked to remedy their JPay issues by submitting a trouble ticket through the JPay kiosks located on the housing units. JPay responses are often pre-scripted and do not always offer a solution to the issue. The pre-scripted responses often cause frustration to people filing complaints who are unable to resolve their JPay concerns. When brought to the attention of this office, staff review the JPay responses and make referrals directly to JPay staff in an effort to ensure the complaint receives an appropriate response.

The JP5 tablet had been the model sold within the DOC since 2015. JPay ceased production of the JP5 tablet at the end of 2020 and introduced the new JP6 tablet. According to JPay, the JP6 tablet offers an extended battery life by utilizing a lithium battery, is 2X more powerful than the JP5 and offers better resolution. The implementation and transition to the new JP6 was a lengthy process. DOC reported it took several meetings with JPay, the Divisions of Administration and Operations and the Special Investigations Division to authorize the sale the JP6 tablet.

In June 2021, JPay sent an email notification to the population announcing the roll-out of the new JP6 tablet. Starting June 28, 2021, incarcerated persons were able to pre-order the JP6 tablet at a promotional price of \$69.99 for a limited time. There was no mandate for current JP5 owners to purchase a JP6 player; however, they were offered an upgrade to the JP6 player for \$49.99 until October 26, 2021 with the exchange of the JP5 tablet. Per DOC policy, incarcerated persons are only allowed one electronic device at a time. JPay has advised they will continue to offer promotional pricing periods, especially around the holidays. Additional information concerning JPay tablets and their services can be found on their website (www.jpay.com).

In September of 2021, the DOC started to receive the new JP6 tablets and began to distribute the players throughout the facilities. Some facilities could not distribute the players to the prison population until charging stations were installed on the housing units. Based on the feedback received by this office, the majority of users appear to be pleased with the updates the JP6 offers.

The most common complaints received by this office are waiting for the tablets to be distributed due to institutional transfers and requests for refunds due to close release dates. In addition, our office has received numerous complaints from people housed on multiple different units at South Woods State Prison that the JPay kiosk are either not functioning at all, or not functioning properly. This results in people being unable to submit electronic remedy forms or synch their tablets in order to download purchases. This office has referred these concerns to the Administration at South Woods State Prison. We were recently notified that JPay has approved the equipment needed to resolve these issues; however, there is no timetable for completion.

This office will continue to work closely with JPay to address complaints that cannot be resolved via a JPay Support Ticket.

NJDOC Inmate Remedy System

The electronic Remedy System allows for people in prison to quickly lodge complaints and ask questions. Although the system is not perfect, it allows people who are incarcerated to have direct communication with staff that can expeditiously address their issues. The prior system of paper Remedy Forms lacked confidentiality and accountability, and was archaic. People who are incarcerated increased their submission of forms from thousands to hundreds of thousands after the conversion from paper to electronic.

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

The OCO published a review of the NJDOC Inmate Remedy System database in last year's annual report. The number of unopened/overdue and pending/overdue responses at that time was concerning.. On October 5 and 6, 2021, another statistical review of the NJDOC Inmate Remedy System was completed. DOC has made impressive progress in ensuring that Remedy Forms are being opened and responded to within the appropriate time limits. As the below table exhibits, almost all facilities are in full compliance with the Remedy System Policy time restrictions. It is noted that Northern State Prison continues to have a significant number of unopened/overdue Inquiry Forms. According to the NJDOC Internal Management Procedure for the Inmate Remedy System, Inquiries should be addressed/responded to within fifteen (15) calendar days of submission and Grievances should be addressed/responded to within thirty (30) calendar days of submission, unless further investigation is required and documented in the system.

Facility	Inquiry Forms			Grievance Forms		
	Total	Pending Overdue	Unopened	Total	Pending Overdue	Unopened
Adult Diagnostic & Treatment Center	5,238	0	0	315	0	0
Bayside State Prison	20,979	0	1	1,094	0	0
Central Reception & Assignment Facility	8,245	0	0	1,114	0	0
East Jersey State Prison	24,630	0	0	4,335	0	0
Edna Mahan Correctional Facility For Women	30,695	3	1	4,289	5	1
Garden State Correctional Facility	25,176	3	0	5,240	0	0
Mid-State Correctional Facility	18,370	0	0	530	0	0
New Jersey State Prison	28,085	0	0	7,417	0	0
Northern State Prison	47,672	8	153	11,223	4	0
Southern State Correctional Facility	22,352	2	0	3,086	0	0
South Woods State Prison	39,372	23	11	7,385	11	2
William H. Fauver Youth Correctional Facility	14,708	0	0	1,555	0	0
TOTAL	285,522	39	166	47,580	20	3
		<1%	<1%		<1%	<1%

Query completed 10/05/2021 & 10/06/2021

A separate statistical review was conducted on October 5 and 6, 2021 for Inquiry and Grievance Forms submitted to Medical, Dental and Mental Health Staff. The query reveals that their overdue numbers have increased, with 49 unopened and overdue inquiries as opposed to the 0 unopened and overdue Inquiries from the 2019-2020 review. Additionally 100 inquiries and 34 Grievances were found to be pending and overdue. The 2019-2020 review revealed that 75 Inquiries and 34

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Grievances were pending and overdue at the time of the query. This increase in unanswered/unopened inquiry and grievance forms are substantial.

This office will continue to monitor the Inmate Remedy System and notify the appropriate staff of any deficiencies that are noted.

University Correctional Health Care (by type)	Inquiry Forms			Grievance Forms		
	Total	Pending Overdue	Unopened	Total	Pending Overdue	Unopened
Medical	32,712	100	49	5,048	34	3
Mental Health	7,613	0	0	1,118	0	0
Dental	4,146	1	0	534	0	0
TOTAL	44,471	101	49	7,980	34	3
		<1%	<1%		<1%	<1%

Query completed 10/05/2021 & 10/06/2021

An OCO staff member, along with DOC staff, is participating in an audit of the Inmate Remedy System of all correctional facilities to ensure staff are responding to inquiries and grievances appropriately and in a timely manner. The auditors are reviewing 1.5% of all Remedy Forms filed at each facility and then will meet with Administrative staff to discuss the findings. As of the writing of this report, only the audit of South Woods State Prison has been completed.

Medical, Mental Health & Dental Treatment

The Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson receives a high volume of contacts regarding medical, mental health, and dental concerns. As the Ombudsperson's Office does not have medical, mental health, or dental personnel within its staff, the office refers these concerns to University Correctional Healthcare (UCHC) staff, Department of Corrections Director of Medical Services, Director of Mental Health Services, the Statewide Patient Advocate, and when applicable, the Director of Dental Services.

The contacts received in this office come from people who are incarcerated, family and friends and outside agencies. As their concerns range in severity, each one is treated with sensitivity and importance by being referred to the appropriate DOC and UCHC staff immediately upon receipt. In most cases the Statewide Patient Advocate will assess the complaint and forward to the facility's medical personnel for triage.

This past year has seen a continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic and its challenges, but also brought with it the availability of COVID-19 vaccinations. People who are incarcerated and Correctional Staff were offered the vaccination at its onset. With the concern of new variants, and in hopes to keep both the prison population, visitors, and Department personnel healthy, the Department implemented incentive programs to encourage as many people as possible to receive the vaccination. As of October 1, 2021 a total of 13,651 vaccine doses were distributed to people who are incarcerated. An additional 5,469 doses were provided to DOC Staff. (Information obtained from the NJ DOC Website) It should be noted that the vaccination doses provided does not include those individuals who were vaccinated outside of the Department of Corrections or vaccinated prior to transfer into a NJDOC facility. Therefore, it may be presumed that this number is somewhat higher than reported.

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

In addition to promoting vaccinations, the Department of Corrections combats the spread of the COVID-19 virus by implementing a strict testing protocol, as well imposing a mask mandate for staff, incarcerated persons and visitors. Both staff and people who are incarcerated are required to complete a weekly COVID-19 test. Any individuals who test positive are quarantined until cleared by medical personnel. The Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson assists with this mandate by reporting their observations directly to the Institution's Administration. In an effort to ensure that incarcerated persons would not be dissuaded from visiting medical for financial reasons, the Department of Corrections has suspended the collection of copayments usually required for medical visits. This suspension was put into effect in April 2020 and remains in place as of the preparation of this report.

Additionally, the Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson received complaints of medical treatment being delayed due to the impact of the pandemic. This was a continuation of a problem that started at the outset of the pandemic as non-emergent outside appointments (specialists, consults and diagnostic testing) were cancelled. However, the Department has been able to slowly start scheduling some of these non-emergent medical procedures and treatments. Hopefully, this trend will continue and allow those individuals in need to attend their appointments.

In closing, this Office continues to receive questions and concerns regarding medical, mental health, and dental concerns. As with previous years this Office will continue being steadfast in its response by ensuring each matter is referred to the appropriate medical professionals in an effort to resolve the area of concern.

Prison Rape Elimination Act

The Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (P.R.E.A.) is the first United States federal law passed dealing with assault of prisoners, requiring "the gathering of national statistics about the problem; the development of guidelines for states about how to address prisoner rape; the creation of a review panel to hold annual hearings; and the provision of grants to states to combat the problem."

Historically a staff member of the OCO attended all PREA Sexual Assault Advisory Council meetings to review and analyze PREA allegation cases. Since March 2020, the OCO has not been invited to attend any meetings. It is presumed that virtual meetings were held, however invitations were not extended to this office.

Property / Property Claims

Lost, damaged, or destroyed property continues to be an ongoing problem for the Department of Corrections, and thus the Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson as well. This office receives a significant number of complaints from people who are incarcerated as well as their friends and family members indicating that they are missing items, or that property is delayed in reaching them. This occurs both for individuals who have moved within their institution and those who transferred to a different facility.

When people do not receive their property, or upon receipt find that it is damaged, they are to complete an "Inmate Claim for Lost, Damaged or Destroyed Personal Property" form as directed by N.J.A.C. 10A:2-6.1. Along with the aforementioned form, the complaint filer is required to provide documentation showing proof of purchase and proof of prior possession. The form, inventory sheet(s) and receipt(s) are to be submitted within in fifteen days of the incident or the

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

discovery of the incident to the Administrator or designee where the person is presently housed for investigation by the Custody Major or designee. The Custody member overseeing the investigation will then make a recommendation if the claim should be approved or denied. The Custody staff looking into the claim may obtain an statement from the incarcerated person and/or any witness statements. The investigator shall also verify ownership of the missing item(s). Once the investigation is complete, the Custody member will make a recommendation if the claim should be approved or denied. This recommendation is forwarded to the institution's Property Claims Committee or Business Manager. The Property Claims Committee or the Business Manager is to assess the submitted claim and the recommendation including supporting documentation provided by the Custody member during its review. After deliberation they shall make a determination if the person will be provided compensation, replacement, or if the institution finds no error on behalf of the Department of Corrections. If the Committee or the Business Manager deems no fault on the Department of Corrections the person is not provided reimbursement for their loss.

During the reporting period, the Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson was a member (non-voting) of the Property Claims Committees at three correctional facilities: New Jersey State Prison, Bayside State Prison and Garden State Youth Correctional Facility. While our office is a non-voting member of these committees, we are able to provide information and ask questions as necessary. We believe that the presence of our office on these committees is beneficial as we may be able to provide information that will help resolve the claim. During the preparation of this report, Northern State Prison invited the Assistant Ombudsperson to join their Property Claims Committee. We believe having a representative of this office on those committees is beneficial to the population as well as the Department of Corrections and we encourage those facilities to invite us to join their committees.

The Department of Corrections policy states that they have 30 days to forward property after an institutional transfer. While delays in the shipment of property are not new, this past year has seen longer than normal delays. Staffing issues, partly caused by COVID-19 were largely responsible for these delays. Additionally, there are always other instances of property being misplaced when there is an emergent situation that requires the individual to be moved; such as a medical emergency or disciplinary incident. In these situations, individuals do not pack their own property. This can lead to items being damaged, lost or stolen. While the DOC policy requires staff to oversee the packing of property, this does not always happen. As a result, property is not packed by staff, or under supervision, resulting in items being damaged or stolen.

When a person is moved for a disciplinary or medical reason, the property may be delayed getting to the person due to the uncertainty of whether or not the person will return to the original housing unit. Consequently, the individual may be without their property for an extended period of time. There can be problems within the facility as well. Instead of following the person to the medical or disciplinary unit, the property may remain in the storage unit on the person's prior housing unit. When the person is moved to another unit within the same facility, there could be a delay in having the property brought to the new housing location if staff do not attempt to locate the property. In order to resolve these situations, staff should make an effort to locate the person's property so that it can be provided to them.

Although the Department of Corrections has made changes to the property claim procedures over the years, it does not appear that any significant progress has been made, as evidenced by the large number of complaints this office continues to receive.

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Mandatory Minimum Sentencing

In November 2019, the New Jersey Criminal Sentencing and Disposition Commission released its Annual Report, which included recommendations for several sentencing reforms. The following recommendations pertained to removing or reducing mandatory minimum sentencing for certain criminal offenses:

1. Eliminate mandatory minimum sentences for non-violent drug crimes.
2. Eliminate mandatory minimum sentences for non-violent property crimes.
3. Reduce the mandatory minimum sentence for two crimes – second degree robbery and second degree burglary – that previously have been subject to penalties associated with far more serious offenses.
4. Apply recommendations #1, #2 and #3 retroactively so that current incarcerated persons may seek early release.

As of the writing of this report, there has only been a resolution to item number 1. In April 2021, Attorney General Grewal issued a directive that instructed prosecutors in New Jersey to waive mandatory parole disqualifiers—commonly known as mandatory minimum prison terms—for six non-violent drug crimes. To implement this Directive, upon request by an incarcerated defendant, the prosecutor shall agree to file a joint motion to amend the defendant's sentence in cases that satisfy the following two conditions:

(a) The defendant is currently serving a sentence for a violation of one of the following crimes: N.J.S.A. 2C:35-3, 2C:35-4, 2C:35-5, 2C:35-6, 2C:35-7, or 2C:35-8; and

(b) At the time of the request, the defendant remains ineligible for parole solely on account of the parole disqualifier mandated by any of the offenses listed above.

The Attorney General's Office launched a portal earlier this year (<https://www.njoag.gov/sentencing/>), which allows family or friends to submit a request to have the mandatory minimum term removed. The request will be forwarded to the County Prosecutor's Office that originally handled the case to confirm eligibility for sentence modification.

Legislation that would reduce the mandatory minimum terms for second degree robbery and second degree burglary was proposed and sent to Governor Murphy (<https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562021/20210419a.shtml>); however, he vetoed the legislation. The Governor indicated that he refused to sign it because the legislation would reduce mandatory sentences for crimes that the sentencing commission did not recommend.

It is the opinion of this office that the Legislature should provide the Governor with a bill that includes only the recommendations of the sentencing panel; that is to reduce the mandatory minimum terms for 2nd degree Robbery and 2nd degree Burglary, as the Governor has indicated that he would sign it. This will provide immediate relief to those identified by the Sentencing Commission.

New Jersey Department of Corrections Covid-19 Response

Beginning in March of 2020, the New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) implemented plans to reduce the spread of COVID-19 throughout the statewide facilities. Ongoing efforts include, but are not limited to, COVID-19 health screenings, temperature scans for all who enter the facilities, symptom related survey questions, contact tracing, ongoing Covid-19 testing and mandatory masking. The visit program has been adjusted accordingly. Transfers have been limited

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

and mandatory quarantine upon arrival at the receiving institution has been put into effect. In addition to these efforts, Governor Murphy signed Executive Order No. 124 on April 10, 2020 directing the NJDOC to temporarily release qualifying at risk individuals to Emergency Medical Home Confinement.

After a temporary suspension of the visit program, the NJDOC reinstated outdoor visits in October of 2020, limiting the number of visitors permitted to 2 adults and 2 children per person. Efforts to reduce the chances of COVID-19 transmission during these visits include increased sanitation, social distancing, requiring masks, restriction of physical contact, temperature scans and a COVID-19 screening questionnaire. In August 2021, the New Jersey Department of Corrections began using the COVID-19 Activity Level Report to determine if it was safe for visits to be held at each facility. As long as the activity level is "Yellow" or "Green", visits will occur with masking mandates in place. If the activity level shows as "Orange", contact visits would continue for fully vaccinated individuals only. These visits take place outdoors, with physical contact still limited. For non-fully vaccinated persons, there are increases in postage and non-contact visit alternatives. If the activity level shows "Red" then the visit program is temporarily suspended. Currently, all visits need to be scheduled in advance. Although we recognize the impact the lack of visits has on the population and their families, we feel it is a necessary measure in reducing the spread of COVID-19, as the NJDOC and State of New Jersey continue to see a substantial number of positive cases.

P.L. 2020, CHAPTER 111 was signed on October 19, 2020 and became effective November 4, 2020. The Bill allowed for incarcerated persons who met certain criteria to be awarded up to 244 days of Public Health Emergency Credits (PHEC). Those within 365 days of the expiration of their sentence were eligible for the PHEC at the rate of 122 days for each month, or portion thereof, served during the declared emergency. Those who fell under the following criteria were excluded: anyone serving a sentence under 2C:47-1-repetitive and compulsive; 2C:11-3-murder; 2C:14-2-aggravated sexual assault or a Mandatory Supervision or Parole Supervision for Life for any of the aforementioned offenses; parolees in custody awaiting revocation; or active ISP participants. Those released as a result of this Bill are prohibited from contacting their victims.

On November 4, 2020, 2,216 incarcerated persons were released from the NJDOC after receiving the PHEC. With each extension of the Public Health Emergency by Governor Murphy, additional persons became eligible for the aforementioned credits as their scheduled release dates fell within 365 days of the declared emergency. The executive order was terminated on June 4, 2021. People with a maximum release date prior to June 5, 2022 as of June 4, 2021 and who did not fall under the previously mentioned exclusions, were eligible for PHEC. Anyone with a projected maximum release date of June 05, 2022 and later was not eligible for the credits. At the same time, those that were still actively on Emergency Medical Home Confinement were brought back into the institutions. While we agree that the purpose of the legislation was useful in reducing the spread of COVID -19 in the NJDOC, we believe the application of the credits should not have been limited only to those persons scheduled to be released within 365 days. This office received multiple contacts for persons whose maximum expirations dates were just days or weeks beyond June 4, 2022 who were not eligible to receive the credits. Many people who were directly affected by COVID-19 did not receive the credits, including those who endured periods of quarantine as a result of symptoms or positive tests, as they were not scheduled to be released within 365 days of the declared emergency.

In January of 2021, the NJDOC began offering vaccines to both staff and people who are incarcerated. In an effort to increase the number of people vaccinated, vaccine incentive programs are being offered statewide. To be eligible, persons are required to take a COVID-19 education course offered by the Institutional Medical staff and receive both vaccine doses. Once complete, eligible persons can receive 10 days credit off their maximum expiration date. Those whose

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

maximum expiration date cannot be reduced by the credit due to a controlling mandatory minimum, or those serving terms that cannot be reduced by credit such as Mandatory Parole Supervision Violations or Parole Supervision for Life Violations, will receive an additional commissary credit of \$10.00.

As a result of the increased need for medical services, all medical co-pays have been suspended by the NJDOC.

Facility Inspections

Pursuant to Title 52 Chapter 27EE-28.2, the Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson shall conduct both scheduled and unannounced inspections of State Correctional Facilities. The findings of the inspections are posted on the Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson's website.

Since the first inspection was completed in April 2021, the Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson has completed a total of fifteen housing unit inspections at the following institutions: Bayside State Prison, East Jersey State Prison, Edna Mahan Correctional Facility, Garden State Youth Correctional Facility, Mid State Correctional Facility, New Jersey State Prison, South Woods State Prison, and Southern State Correctional Facility. Ten inspections were announced and five were unannounced. All of the completed inspection reports are posted on the OCO website, along with the administration's response to the report.

In summary, the Assistant Ombudspersons who participated in the inspections observe and report on the following, but not limited to: living conditions, food service, sanitation, safety, and access to working telephones and a grievance system. Areas of concern for most of the institutions were not having the appropriate institutional forms available on the unit, persons in need of bedding, kiosks and telephones in need of repair, and better cleaning of shower areas. Fortunately, each facility's administration were able to resolve those areas that could be immediately corrected. For example, cleaning was conducted in areas of need, necessary forms were provided to the tier, and missing items were provided. Some maintenance issues are not as easily rectified and require more time to resolve, such as the kiosks and telephones which need outside vendors to repair. In these circumstances the institution reached out to the vendors to schedule technicians. In addition, some DOC facilities, such as East Jersey State Prison, are older and in ongoing need of repairs from faulty sinks to leaking ceilings. In these cases, the facility maintenance departments were able to correct the malfunctions.

In addition to a visual inspection, the Assistant Ombudspersons speak to those who are present on the housing unit during the inspection. The interviews allow the incarcerated persons to voice concerns and call attention to problems that may not be readily available by sight. During the interviews at Edna Mahan Correctional Facility it was reported that the hot water was not working sufficiently to allow multiple people to shower. Upon this complaint the Administration advised the hot water heater was purchased to resolve this issue and awaiting delivery. Another area of concern is ensuring the population is in possession of the appropriate number of face masks to protect against the spread of COVID-19. The interviews revealed each institution, with the exception of Mid State Correctional Facility, had persons in need of additional or cloth masks. Without delay the institutions rectified this concern by providing additional face coverings.

Overall, the inspections conducted by the Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson give insight to the Administration at each facility in areas that need further attention while providing the population another tool to resolve said issues. Many complaints and maintenance problems were revealed

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

because of these inspections and all matters were resolved quickly by the institution's Administrators and Custody Majors.

The Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson looks forward to continuing with this relatively new area of responsibility and having a proactive role in resolving concerns prior to them escalating. As part of this process, this office is currently revamping the inspection tool, in an effort to conduct a more encompassing inspection of the facilities, and to fully comply with the law.

Restoration of Commutation Time

Many people contact this office for assistance with receiving restoration of commutation time which appears to be a labor-intensive process for staff and should not be denied unless the person is within ninety days of his maximum expiration date. Therefore, we recommend that the restoration of commutation time process be done automatically as the person becomes eligible, and not require a written request. Automating this process will ensure that all persons eligible for the restoration will receive it, thus eliminating their need to submit a written request.

EMCF

On January 12, 2021 this office received a telephone contact from an incarcerated person at EMCF alleging that she was assaulted by staff during an "after hours" cell extraction in the RHU. Three additional telephone contacts were received on January 14, 2021 from two incarcerated persons and a family member of an incarcerated person alleging physical and sexual assault during the same incident. All four complaints were referred to the Special Investigations Division immediately following receipt of the call. PREA protocol was initiated by DOC staff for sexual assault allegation. A staff member reported to the facility on January 15, 2021 and was advised by DOC Executive staff that the matter was under criminal investigation. The staff member toured the RHU unit where the incident occurred. The four persons that were allegedly assaulted were no longer housed on the unit. Several DOC staff members have been indicted as a result of the incident.

The OCO received a phone call on September 27, 2021 from an incarcerated person regarding allegations of mistreatment in a housing unit/building other than her own. The person referenced safety concerns, allegations of sexual and physical abuse and neglect for those housed in Stowe 2. On September 30, 2021 three OCO staff members reported to the facility to evaluate the safety concerns by interviewing a sampling of people housed on the unit. One of those interviewed reported an allegation of sexual assault to OCO staff and indicated the matter was under investigation by the Special Investigations Division. That person reported being satisfied with the investigation thus far. At the conclusion of those interviews, a briefing was conducted with the facility Administrator and the Assistant Commissioner for Women. The information candidly provided during the interviews was referred to the appropriate DOC Executive staff.

The transfer of transgender persons from male correctional facilities to Edna Mahan Correctional Facility has resulted in numerous contacts to this office. Transgender people have made numerous complaints, ranging from physical assaults to verbal harassment. They have also expressed dissatisfaction that they do not have the same housing opportunities available to them, because they are transgender.

Complaints from cisgender persons have been received regarding transgender persons being housed in EMCF. Some have expressed fears of violence being committed upon them by the

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

transgender persons. Additionally some cisgender persons have alleged that transgender persons are being provided preferential treatment.

Legionnaires Disease

The Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson (OCO) was initially contacted in April of 2021 by various people housed at both East Jersey State Prison (EJSP) and Northern State Prison (NSP) regarding concerns about an outbreak of Legionnaires Disease. The complaints received from Northern State Prison centered on the water in Building 6 and the death of an incarcerated person, rumored to be due to Legionnaires. It should be noted, Building 6 was the previous location for the Infirmary and the Stabilization Unit at NSP. The complaints received from East Jersey State Prison were specific to a person testing positive for Legionnaires Disease, in conjunction with people witnessing water samples being taken from the 4-Wing unit fountains.

Upon receipt of these complaints OCO contacted both EJSP and NSP Administrations to advise them of the complaints/allegations received in our office. We requested to be updated regarding the measures taken to remedy the situation. As it pertains to NSP, information obtained from Administration provided that Building 6 was placed off-line, testing samples were sent out for testing and water treatments were completed. As of the date of this report, no date has been provided by the Capital Construction Unit-NJDOC for normal operations to resume in this location.

As it pertains to EJSP, information received from Administration provided that a single positive case was confirmed. In response, water fountains were tested and the population was notified via the inmate television channel, through a posting on the unit bulletin board and during the Tier Rep Meeting. Additionally, incarcerated persons were provided drinking water from the cook house. AO Jett completed a tour of 4-wing at EJSP to confirm that the water distribution was being completed. Furthermore, the four areas identified as being a possible source, to include 2 cells and 2 water fountains, were taken off-line and placed out of service.

Lastly, both facilities have advised that they continue to work closely with NJDOC Capital Construction Unit and NJ Department of Health to follow all CDC recommendations.

State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT

Future Objectives

Staff's primary focus is to address all complaints received regarding persons incarcerated within the NJDOC. The OCO will intervene when information is received that the NJDOC is adversely affecting the safety, welfare, health or rights of the incarcerated. It is hoped that with the future appointment of the Ombudsperson and direction from legal counsel, the mission of the office may change to better align with the requirements mandated by law.

1. Maintain visibility within correctional facilities.
 - a. Ombudsperson's Staff will continue to conduct regular site visits to correctional facilities
 - i. Conduct interviews with incarcerated people
 - ii. Tour housing units and other congregate areas
 - iii. Meet with institutional staff as needed
 - b. Corrections Ombudsperson will also conduct site visits to Correctional Facilities on an as needed basis to meet with incarcerated persons and administrative staff.
2. Respond promptly to inquiries from people who are incarcerated and other stakeholders in a timely manner while prioritizing each in order of importance.
 - a. Contingent upon available staffing and resources, all inquiries will be addressed within thirty days of receipt.
3. Increase community outreach efforts and public awareness. (advocacy groups, families and loved ones, general public, and various conferences)
 - a. Community Forums:
 - i. Corrections Ombudsperson's Staff will attend and participate in State sponsored and/or local community forums as needed.
 - ii. Corrections Ombudsperson's Staff will host Quarterly Public Hearings to gather stakeholder input in the Ombudsperson's activities and prioritize concerns related to incarcerated individuals.
4. Continue inspections of all State Prison Facilities and provide completed reports to the Department of Corrections.
 - a. Revamp inspection criteria to more encompass the complete correctional experience for the population.

Prepared by:
Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson