



MULTNOMAH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff Nicole Morrisey O'Donnell

January 9, 2026

District Attorney Nathan Vasquez
Multnomah County District Attorney's Office
1200 SW First Avenue
Portland, OR 97204

Re: 2025 Corrections Grand Jury Report

District Attorney Vasquez,

The Multnomah County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) has received the 2025 Corrections Grand Jury Report. I want to personally thank the Grand Jurors and your staff for the hard work that went into this year's review of our Multnomah County correctional facilities.

As an agency, we value the meaningful work by the Corrections Grand Jury, as they review the conditions and management of correctional facilities throughout Multnomah County. This oversight review process provides transparency and accountability into critical jail operations. These community members took time to hear the perspectives of both our staff and the adults in our custody whose voices add value to the overall understanding of the institutional environment.

I appreciate that the Grand Jury shares our urgency and concern for addressing and stabilizing staffing issues. Over the past year, with investments during the FY26 Budget, we were able to maintain stable funding within our HR team, and we will continue to advocate for these critical roles to support workforce stability and reduce vacancy rates across the organization. Our office has benefited from bringing back retirees in various roles, especially Court Services. I appreciate the Grand Jury identifying this key area within our justice system as crucial to the efficient operations of the courts. We look forward to continuing to coordinate with the Courts to find effective solutions to challenges in the increasing schedules of court matters.

Once again, the Grand Jurors noted it is time to begin planning for a corrections center of the future in Multnomah County, noting that operating two facilities perpetuates inefficiencies and duplication of work that is costly and challenging to staff. We must ensure our facilities are safe and physically sound, not only to meet constitutional mandates, but also have the infrastructure to offer rehabilitative programs and reentry connections.

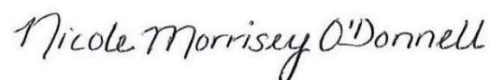
The Multnomah County Sheriff's Office fully agrees with the grand jury's recommendation that additional support be directed to the newly established Deflection Center. It is also essential to understand that MCSO is not responsible for, or capable of, serving as the default behavioral health or treatment provider for Multnomah County. A well-resourced center, connected with treatment providers, social services, and community partners is essential to effectively engage individuals whose criminal behavior is driven by substance use disorder. I believe continued innovation, particularly in the assessment and referral processes, strengthens the County's response by ensuring interventions are coordinated and focused on addressing underlying causes.

Once operationally stable and functioning as intended to prevent unnecessary entry into our correctional facilities, I am interested in exploring an expansion that supports successful transitions from jail and reduces the likelihood of returning to custody. Adults in custody with substance use disorders routinely leave custody without treatment continuity, housing stability, or access to care. Often, they return days, weeks, or months later. A center offering deflection and transition services that is well-funded and resourced can interrupt that cycle by aligning medical care, supervision, and social and housing services at the point of release. This approach recognizes the realities that individuals face upon release and would focus on providing a structured pathway from custody-to-community that reduces further justice involvement.

Throughout the grand jury's report, and in its recommendation, is a theme of continuity of care. MCSO agrees that ongoing and updated suicide prevention training is necessary for deputies across our agency. Training that corrects outdated or harmful terminology is a critical component of effective prevention, response, and reporting efforts. Changing long-standing vocabulary and practices will require sustained efforts that MCSO aims to achieve through ongoing training and improvements to foster safer, more supportive environments within our correctional facilities.

Relationships alone cannot carry the reforms MCSO is committed to advancing without data to guide it. To strengthen trust with our stakeholders, MCSO remains committed to improving how we collect, analyze, and share data to ensure that decisions are transparent and well-informed. MCSO supports additional funding from the County to establish multiple Jail Data Analyst FTEs to advance our modern-day jail governance. Having streamlined data collection enables MCSO to continuously monitor, conduct equity analysis, and make informed policy adjustments. Our current systems generate extensive data on length of stay, use of force, access to services, and other critical pieces of information. We agree that enhanced analytic functions can greatly benefit the County. These efforts require sustained investments in people, systems, and tools that can integrate and analyze our data effectively.

Sincerely,



Nicole Morrissey O'Donnell
Sheriff

CC: Chair Vega Pederson, Commissioner Moyer, Commissioner Singleton,
Commissioner Brim-Edwards, Commissioner Jones-Dixon, Chief Deputy Reardon,
Chief Deputy Stewart, Captain Kurtiss Morrison, Katie Burgard, Brent Weisberg