

December 23, 2021

Armond Budish, County Executive  
Office of the Executive  
2079 East Ninth Street  
Cleveland, OH 44115

Re: Response to Assistance for the Cuyahoga County Corrections Center

Dear County Executive Budish,

Thank you for making the Governor aware of the staffing concern at the Cuyahoga County Corrections Center (CCCC). Upon receiving notification of your request for assistance, I called Sheriff Viland. He provided me with a great deal of information and we scheduled a meeting to have a larger discussion. Ultimately the Sheriff, Jail Administrator of Corrections Ronda Gibson, the DRC Bureau of Adult Detention and I had a lengthier planning call.

During the meeting, we learned that the major problem being experienced by CCCC is low staffing numbers. This has been an on-going problem at the jail, but it has recently been exacerbated by the re-emergence of COVID-19 and its variants in CCCC's workforce. At the time of the request, we were informed that approximately 56 corrections staff were off work due to COVID-19. Additionally, there are reported to be 147 incarcerated individuals who have recently tested positive for COVID-19.

After this meeting, I met with Ohio Adjutant General John Harris regarding the possibility of providing staffing assistance. At this point the Governor has approved an assistance plan which includes technical and staffing assistance as well as some expectation regarding local interventions. There will be twenty-five members of the Ohio Military Reserve deployed to CCCC beginning December 28, 2021. The deployment is expected to be in place for 30 days. In order to maximize the likelihood of success of this mission, the following local interventions will need to be put in place by the CCCC.

CCCC interventions:

- COVID-19 guidance for correctional and detention facilities issued by the Centers for Disease Control and the Ohio Department of Health must be rigorously implemented at CCCC.
- All staff posts must be reviewed for immediate need.
  - o Any posts that are not essential and those posts that do not directly contribute to the security and safety of the facility, must temporarily be closed.
- Expedite the on-boarding of staff who are in the hiring queue.

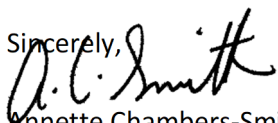
- It is my understanding that there are approximately 40 staff who are in the process of being hired.
- These staff need to be placed in positions at CCCC as quickly as possible.
- Reduce in-person visiting. Reduce attorney visits to regular business hours and emergency situations.
- Cuyahoga County officials must work collaboratively with court and probation personnel to discuss the violation process for those individuals who are on court-ordered supervision as well as open warrants. Priority should be placed on those individuals who are a threat to public safety.

Assistance being offered:

- Governor DeWine has authorized the prompt activation and deployment of 25 members of the Ohio Military Reserve (OHMR).
  - The duration of deployment of the OHMR will be 30 days.
  - The OHMR group will arrive on-site at the CCCC on Tuesday, December 28, 2021.
  - Prior to their arrival, the ODRC will provide the OHMR group with necessary pre-assignment training.
  - Upon arrival at CCCC, the OHMR group will require a tour/orientation to the jail and site-specific training.
- The ODRC Bureau of Adult Detention will provide ongoing technical assistance.
- The ODRC will offer overtime opportunities to qualified ODRC staff members who wish to volunteer to work posts at CCCC.
  - The cost of this overtime will be funded by the ODRC.
  - The overtime opportunities will fall outside the ODRC employee's normal work schedules.
- The Ohio Department of Administrative Services / Office of Collective Bargaining will work collaboratively with Cuyahoga County officials on identifying efficiencies in the provisions of the applicable labor agreements and will also provide technical assistance as needed.

In closing, I would like to thank you and the staff at the CCCC for bringing this staffing issue to our attention. It is through continuing collaborative efforts that we can best keep Ohio safe.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,  


Annette Chambers-Smith, Director

cc: Christopher Viland, Sheriff  
Ronda Gibson, Director of Corrections  
Brendan Sheehan, Administrative Judge  
Michael O'Malley, Prosecutor  
John Adams, Chief of Bureau of Adult Detention