



**Albemarle-Charlottesville Regional Jail Renovation Project  
Inmate Focus Group Summary Notes**

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**Meeting Date:** February 12, 2024

**Total Attendees:** 12 male inmates in group 1; 12 female inmates in group 2

**Overview:** Two separate focus groups were conducted. One with 12 males and the other with 12 females. The inmate survey was used as a discussion guide. Paper copies were handed out to each participant. Some wrote their responses on the survey and returned them. The survey had previously been disseminated on their tablets so there was familiarity with the questions. Both groups were very engaged and candid. Discussion was lively but respectful and cordial.

**Focus Group 1 – Male Inmates**

- 1. With the renovation, what should be the priorities? Check all that apply.**

**Outdoor recreation space**

Just ability to go outside for fresh air and sunlight. Fitness equipment.

**Indoor recreation space**

**Natural Light**

Don't frost the windows.

**Improved air quality and heating and cooling**

People get sick. Can see mold in the showers. Filters, air scrubbers kill germs. Charcoal filters for clean air.

**Reliable plumbing (hot water, showers, toilets, and sinks).**

Be able to turn showers on and off.

**Quality housing (number of beds in each cell)**

More storage. Shelving on walls for toiletries. Lockers. Food and dirty clothes all in same box. No place to hang towels. Privacy for bathroom

use. Privacy in the rooms. Need microwaves. Too much starch served. Consider dietary restrictions due to health or religious matters. Better mattresses and sheets. Uniforms that are made of cotton for those with sensitive skin. Concerns about laundering process to ensure there's no cross-contamination or harmful chemicals. Two-piece uniforms instead of the one-piece. Khakis could be an option. Better COVID masks.

Have light switches in the rooms. Need more TVs with larger screens or have programming on their tablets.

**2. With the renovation, what programming space should be accommodated? Check all that apply.**

**Education programs (GED, certificates, college credits/degrees)**

Associate Degree programs; Hanesville Penitentiary has dog training program; culinary arts. Vicky Garber works in prison system for adult learning.

**Mental health programs**

Better screening at intake to minimize problems later in general population. Evaluate inmates better to get the help they need. Veterans have mental health issues that need to be addressed.

**Job training (interview preparation, skilled trades, dress for success)**

HVAC; construction; barber shop; skilled trades; classes to learn how to use computers or smartphones; training for office job as well as skilled trades; real estate. Counseling to help guide on workforce opportunities upon release.

**Medical services (including courses and treatment for addictions)**

**Visitors**

DMV for ID cards and ability to get social security card or other vital records. Checklist of important documents that may be needed. Place for worship or study. Need more ADA compliant areas – cells, showers, etc. A library with books and audiobooks.

Use inmates to help teach some courses or help with laundry.

**3. What should the outdoor recreation area include? Check all that apply.**

**Basketball court**

**Fitness equipment**

**Benches**

**Other**

Handball, track, workout space, weights;

Have outdoor recreational walls/windows for fresh air and ventilation.

Multi-purpose room for movies or other activities.

**4. What should the indoor recreation area include? Check all that apply.**

**Fitness equipment**

**Basketball court**

**Exercise bike/treadmill/elliptical**

**Other**

Cornhole, volleyball, indoor soccer, ping pong, pool tables

**5. What colors help you to relax? Check all that apply.**

Yellow

Blue

Green

Purple

White

Music is soothing too. Any bright colors.

**6. What do you think should be considered to improve inmate and staff safety?**

Staff needs better training. Don't bring your problems to work. Show more respect towards inmates. Better communication skills with inmates.

Fewer people in the spaces. Movement and circulation of people is pretty good for now.

**7. What programs would you suggest to help inmates have a better chance at success in life once they are released?**

Job training

Halfway house

Work release program (earn money that can help when released to assist with family and getting back on their feet)

Access to officials and resources for vital records

Better dental services

**Other comments or suggestions?**

## Focus Group 2 – Female Inmates

1. **With the renovation, what should be the priorities? Check all that apply.**

### **Outdoor recreation space**

Fitness equipment, volleyball, basketball, benches, tables, ping pong, board games, tables printed checkers/chess squares

### **Indoor recreation space**

#### **Natural Light**

Skylight. Windows

#### **Improved air quality and heating and cooling**

Better heating. Pipes rattle loudly. Temperature is too hot or too cold. AC and heat run at the same time. Air quality needs to be improved.

#### **Reliable plumbing (hot water, showers, toilets, and sinks)**

Poor drainage system, on/off for showers instead of constantly pressing button

#### **Quality housing (number of beds in each cell)**

More shelving for toiletries and more storage. Window on cell doors to see and look out the door. Higher ceilings.

2. **With the renovation, what programming space should be accommodated? Check all that apply.**

### **Education programs (GED, certificates, college credits/degrees)**

Dedicated space for classrooms, chalk board, TC programs, re-entry, culinary arts, cosmetology, barbering, how to start a business, GED, Associates Degree. Dedicated space for art. Longer period for GED (5 days vs. 3 days). Study hall space.

### **Mental health programs**

Counseling; more access to counseling

### **Job training (interview preparation, skilled trades, dress for success)**

TC programs; more than just kitchen work. Counselors to help plan job opportunities and training.

### **Medical services (including courses and treatment for addictions)**

Separate from mental health area

### **Visitors**

Dedicated space for family with some privacy. Longer visitation and more than once a month.

**3. What should the outdoor recreation area include? Check all that apply.**

**Basketball court**

**Fitness equipment**

Machines not free weights. Pull-up bars. Treadmills

**Benches**

**Other**

Garden for fresh vegetables. Just the opportunity to go outside for sunshine and fresh air.

**4. What should the indoor recreation area include? Check all that apply.**

**Fitness equipment**

**Basketball court**

**Exercise bike/treadmill/elliptical**

**Other**

Volleyball. Indoor/outdoor to get fresh air. Badminton. Track.

**5. What colors help you to relax? Check all that apply.**

- Yellow
- Blue
- Purple
- Pink
- Orange
- Bright colors
- Motivational words and bible verses on the walls

**6. What do you think should be considered to improve inmate and staff safety?**

- Call button. Intercom in each pod. A way to alert staff of an emergency or other urgent matters. More cameras.
- More privacy in bathrooms and showers.
- Fewer people per room (2 per room suggested)
- Make rooms bigger
- All open pods

**7. What programs would you suggest to help inmates have a better chance at success in life once they are released?**

Job training and job placement support

Housing help

Library (audio and regular books, educational materials)

**Other comments or suggestions?**



## ALBEMARLE-CHARLOTTESVILLE REGIONAL JAIL

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Colonel Martin Kumer  
Superintendent

### **Albemarle-Charlottesville Regional Jail Renovation Project Survey #1**

**14 surveys from focus groups**

**33 surveys from tablets**

**Some items are repeated to show that multiple inmates had the same concerns as indicated in their survey responses.**

**1. With the renovation, what should be the priorities? Check all that apply.**

**33 -- Outdoor recreation space**

**23 -- Indoor recreation space**

**29 -- Natural Light**

**28 -- Improved air quality and heating and cooling**

**32 -- Reliable plumbing (hot water, showers, toilets, and sinks) On/off shower handles/controls**

**25 -- Quality housing (number of beds in each cell)**

• All are important and quality housing is critical we are like cattle. Outdoor recreation space is required by the DOC for 3 hours a day and has never been met here.

• Better beds and mats, thicker covers and sheets, different uniform one solid color instead of black and white stripes

• All of the above should be mandatory. Seating with back support should be considered as well.

**2. With the renovation, what programming space should be accommodated?  
Check all that apply.**

**29 -- Education programs (GED, certificates, college credits/degrees)**

**28 -- Mental health programs**

**36 -- Job training (interview preparation, skilled trades, and dress for success)**

**27 -- Medical services (including courses and treatment for addictions)**

**28 -- Visitors**

• More dental opportunities, fillings, dentures. CDL. Culinary. Cosmetology, barbering, etc Private rooms to secure classroom look. Pencil sharpener. Desk, storage, bigger screen, pencil/paper supplies.

- Visitors are critical. The system is inhumane right now. Education programs and medical are there only to make the jail money, their programs are all substandard.
- College courses and/or medical classes
- Paid work. Many here don't know the fulfillment of honest wages. Teach them to earn and value clean money.
- Mental Health Programs because so many people comes grow Western State and staff doesn't understand someone system.

**3. What should the outdoor recreation area include? Check all that apply.**

**35 -- Basketball court**

**38 -- Fitness equipment**

**32 -- Benches**

**Other**

- Phone; garden; sandbox; pull-up bars; seating area with picnic tables; volleyball
- Fitness equipment and benches and area that has grass and trees like a small Japanese garden. Don't let the assholes mess it up though.
- Full court space
- Footballs
- Volleyball

**4. What should the indoor recreation area include? Check all that apply.**

**37 -- Fitness equipment**

**29 -- Basketball court**

**32 -- Exercise bike/treadmill/elliptical**

**Other**

- Phone; study hall; benches; chairs
- My cardiovascular health has suffered severely over the last 2 years.
- Actual basketball court, floor on the west side is slick and very dangerous.
- Vending machine inside of pods so that we could not only order off canteen but we could also use the machine for items\microwave
- Put in 24-hour rec time, soccer equipment and a pool. Volleyball
- Benches. Seating with back support.
- Footballs
- Weights

**5. What colors help you to relax? Check all that apply.**

**16 -- Yellow**

**20 -- Green**

**10 -- White**

**2 -- Brown**

**16 -- Blue**

**20 -- Purple**

**Other**

- Orange/Peach; Pink; Black; Red; Grey
- Motivational words/encouraging words
- White, with colorful murals painted by inmates.



## 6. What do you think should be considered to improve inmate and staff safety?

- Respect the staff; more cameras; Mental health and medical should be separate space. More cameras. Call button.
- See outside when the door closes.
- Designs
- Shelves in room
- Intercom system
- Having more recreational and classes and library things to do
- Keep offenders with violent tendencies AWAY from people with nonviolent tendencies. Keep extortionists away from the vulnerable.
- For the guards to actually watch the cameras, to reduce the number of people in each section.
- Some type of emotional support while incarcerated
- A little more freedom to build more trust
- I would like to see better food quality and also see different uniform as far as the black and white; one color
- Respect others and don't discriminate
- Less inmates per unit
- Vapes, Better food more TV channels, more rec.
- Idk I don't work here I just live here
- Body cams
- Stopping problems before they start. If on a block like HU-3, if two inmates are yelling at each other, have CO lock them down.
- Having more activities to do to help with our stress and keeps us busy, a library, crafts, painting
- I think there should be intercoms buttons in the dorms so we can have communication with staff
- Keeping inmates busy and entertain keeps stress down having more single cells private cells
- Proper training
- Incentives. Positive reinforcement for good behavior. Inmates have little to lose and don't care about punishment currently.
- If the inmate isn't being rude then staff shouldn't be either.
- 1. Mandatory showering. 2. Threat assessments of inmates who display repetitive violent behavior; & special housing for them.
- Call buttons
- Listening more to what we inmates trying to explain and get a better understanding on what we need. Understanding on both ends.
- Respect
- Better training
- Nothing
- Training for narvan and opioid training suboxone training
- A more thorough form of classification
- I think that the inmates and the Officers Should Once a Month Play Basketball Together to Help us all get Along and Be Friends
- Better meals
- Take grievance more serious
- The more people in one dorm, the more stress/ drama. Don't cram inmates in like a can of tuna.
- More gloves and masks
- Commutation and deescalating training

## 7. What programs would you suggest to help inmates have a better chance at success in life once they are released?

- College courses; dog training courses; work release reinstated, veteran housing
- Access and contact with government agencies (social security, social services, Veterans Administration, UVA Health)
- Job courses
- Re-entry programs – things for felons to succeed.
- GED
- Programs for when we get out.
- Longer GED programs
- Help them get jobs when they leave
- TC programs; re-entry
- Having a bigger plan for release. Work release; work some of your sentence to save money to get ready for release
- A.I. use/integration training.
- A detailed home plan so they have housing, financial support for 90 days until they get on their feet.
- Actual work release to help prepare people for release success ,so people will have the skills and know what they can do
- A reentry program
- Helping with job opportunities
- Mental Health, Housing
- Job training
- Work skills mental health programs and oar classes
- Life after prison program. Have set trades to know where to go when released
- Idk
- Skilled trade and job placement
- GED, work preparation, self-preparation for outside workforce
- Anything better than nothing
- TC
- Job training skills certification
- AA,NA matrix
- Paid work
- Job training
- Psychology, philosophy, and group therapy
- Reentry programs
- Job Program
- People in segment blocks should be able to go to classes and do program while we are in seg. Blocks
- Job training
- Drug abuse counseling family counseling
- Drugs
- A methadone program, cooking class, and trade classes
- A cdl program, logistics course and forklift training
- I Think that you Guy's Should Let Anyone that wants to Better themselves Be in all Programs and Classes So they Succeed in Life
- College programs
- Help getting a job and a place to stay if you are homeless and have mental issue

- Job training, addiction programs, transitional housing. Take away the need for crime, by giving an alternative.
- Business management
- A real trade college or certifications

### **Other comments or suggestions?**

- Add lockers in cells or bed areas. Private bath areas in dorms. Microwave. DMV come in for ID/license.
- Thank you.
- We should have better mental health and better dental.
- Have place for people to see eye doctor
- Better bed space
- This place needs to be fixed in every way possible!!!!
- Chapel. Softer blankets, beds. Private rooms. Outside outing privileges. Having better café updates.
- Food is an essential part of mental health and health in general (our diet is too high in starch, low in good fats/protein)
- Thanks for taking the time to ask me about all of these issues, I know its hard to meet all needs feel free to come see me:-)
- Vending machines and microwaves in every pod like they do every other jail.
- Lower some of the rules like inmates can't communicate with other inmates and passing notes. Some of us have family in here
- I would like the work release to open back up so the people with jobs could provide for their family actually work
- If you are doing good without having any write-ups, you shouldn't get kicked off trustee if you don't have a charge just saying
- Offer a cap pin on canteen I think it would help inmates stress levels
- Stop serving beans so much and give us different means of protein cleaner water in the showers and sinks thank you and god bless
- Seems like y'all know what we need far as a inmate goes this jail so the more we have to do the better our mind control is
- We should be allowed to have more than just 1 visit every month
- Y'all are ridiculous
- More inmate privacy, better cells outside window get air and light.
- N/A

- I think it should be better beds and more space
- I think they should be a pod designated for people in programs BC they should be treated somewhat different and like it would hh
- Would be nice for all inmates to be able to go outside
- In 7 months, I've had no job or programs to keep my sanity. Most opt for medication to stay sane. Include seating with back support
- More food on commissary would be nice
- Taking into account budgetary restraints; slightly improved food services.
- Being able to go outside
- More females on the west side
- Understand people are not perfect yet don't punish them for a year or more once already punished with charge hole time etc.
- Staff should be trained in treating all inmates equal and fair. And should be held responsible for their actions.
- More rec time in 23 and I housing
- We need a methadone program
- I think that there should be a way to communicate anonymously.
- I Think that you Guy's Should Have Better Food Here and you Should Let all inmates Order Outside Food Once a Month
- Better meals and free weight. Also natural lights and outdoor space
- N/A
- A few of the C.O's pick fights with the inmates, take things away and call it a privilege. This builds resentment.
- More games would be nice to help the time go by
- Better healthy food choices would lower medical issues