

**REPORT ON THE
INSPECTION OF**

LEBANON CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

INSPECTION DATE: NOV. 20, 2025



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INTRODUCTION

In the state's 2025-27 biennial budget bill, the 136th General Assembly created the Office of Correctional Facility Inspection Services (CFIS) within the Ohio Attorney General's Office. Established by Ohio Revised Code Section 109.39, CFIS – effective Sept. 30, 2025 – became the primary entity responsible for inspecting Ohio's state correctional institutions, privately operated correctional institutions and youth services facilities. Before that date, the Correctional Institution Inspection Committee (CIIC), a joint committee of the General Assembly, was responsible for inspecting Ohio's correctional institutions and youth facilities. The General Assembly abolished the CIIC and re-constituted it as CFIS in the budget bill.

CFIS's duties are set forth in R.C. 109.39(A), which provides:

“There is, as a section within the office of the attorney general, an office of correctional facility inspection services. The office shall establish and maintain a continuing program of inspection of each state correctional institution used for the custody, control, training, and rehabilitation of persons convicted of crime and of each private correctional facility; any local correctional institution used for the same purposes; and any youth services facility. Each inspection shall include an evaluation of the inmate grievance procedure, compliance with meal requirements, at least one review of rehabilitative or educational programs, and any other compliance area the office determines is appropriate. Not later than the last day of January of each year, the office shall submit a report of its findings from the previous calendar year to the general assembly in accordance with section 101.68 of the Revised Code.”

CFIS is not required to provide a correctional institution or youth facility with advance notice of an inspection, pursuant to R.C. 109.39(A). In addition to its mandatory inspection duties, CFIS may assist the attorney general and correctional facility leadership in developing and evaluating programs to improve the condition or operations of the facilities it is required to inspect. R.C. 109.39(B).

Besides the CFIS inspections, each Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (DRC) facility undergoes an annual inspection and accreditation by the American Correctional Association (ACA) and an internal management audit (IMA). Although CFIS staff may review and refer to the ACA and IMA findings, CFIS inspections are separate and independent.

To institute the continuing program of inspection required by Ohio law, CFIS, shortly after its formation, began conducting an initial inspection of the DRC and Department of Youth Services (DYS) facilities that had not been inspected by CIIC in 2025. The initial inspections were designed, in part, to help CFIS familiarize itself with each facility, the warden and the staff. Further, each initial inspection allows CFIS to determine what additional data might be needed for future inspections and what inspection methodology is appropriate. This report details the initial inspection of Lebanon Correctional Institution (LECI).

GENERAL OVERVIEW

On Nov. 20, 2025, CFIS completed an initial inspection of LECI. Warden Mike Marinich was notified the day before that CFIS inspectors would arrive at 9 a.m. the following day. CFIS inspectors were on-site at LECI for roughly four hours. The CFIS team consisted of Dr. James Wesson, chief of inspections, and Deborah Drummond, lead inspector.

LECI is a maximum-security correctional facility for adult men located in Lebanon, Ohio. It has a maximum capacity of 2,400; on the day of the inspection, it housed roughly 1,700 incarcerated persons (IPs). The facility has single-cell occupancy style, split up into units. Each unit houses about 128 incarcerated adults. The facility opened in 1960.

LECI's most recent IMA was conducted on March 4-6, 2025. The annual audit, conducted by an independent auditor, reviews a facility's compliance with ACA's 5th Edition Standards and the 2025 Ohio Standards and Observations, in preparation for the next ACA audit. All institutional work, industry and vocational education programs are also audited.

In the 2025 IMA, LECI was found to be in compliance with 60 of the 64 applicable mandatory standards and 434 of the 437 applicable non-mandatory ACA standards. LECI was in compliance with 65 of the 74 applicable Ohio standards. The table below illustrates LECI's rate of compliance with ACA and Ohio standards over the past three years.

IMA Audit Scores	2025	2024	2023
ACA Mandatory	100%	100%	100%
ACA Non-mandatory	99.3%	99.3%	99.3%
Ohio Standards	88%	93.8%	95.5%

AREAS INSPECTED BY CFIS

Pursuant to R.C. 109.39, CFIS must inspect the grievance process, food services, and an educational or a rehabilitative program. In addition, R.C. 109.39 empowers CFIS to inspect any other area that it deems appropriate. While at LECI, the CFIS team also inspected:

- Medical services
- Recreation
- Library/Law library
- Visitation area
- Transitional Programming Unit (restrictive housing)

In advance of the inspection, CFIS inspectors requested that LECI staff produce copies of the previous seven days of administrative duty officer (ADO) reports and the 15 most recent grievances. Upon arrival at the facility, the team was greeted by the warden's administrative assistant. After brief introductions in the warden's conference room, the inspection, led by LECI leadership, began.

MANDATED AREAS OF INSPECTION

Grievance process

DRC's grievance process, governed by Ohio Administrative Code Section 5120-9-31, consists of three steps. It begins with an IP filing an informal complaint resolution (ICR) with the supervisor of the area in which the IP has a concern. The IP has 14 calendar days from the date of the incident to file an ICR. The inspector of institution services (IIS) has 14 days to respond and has an option to file an extension.

If the complaint is not resolved or the IP is dissatisfied with the inspector's decision, the IP can file a grievance to the IIS within 14 days of the ICR response. Or, in cases in which an IP believes that the warden or the IIS was personally and knowingly involved in a violation of a law, rule or policy – or condoned such a violation – the IP can file a grievance directly to the chief inspector.

The institutional inspector investigates a grievance to determine whether any DRC policy, rule or procedural guideline was violated – and either denies or grants the grievance. If the IP is not satisfied with the inspector's decision, the IP can appeal it to the chief inspector. The Office of the Chief Inspector, housed within DRC's central office, makes the final decision for every grievance appealed from the facility level. R.C. 5120.06.

Each IP is issued a tablet computer with access to ViaPath, the system IPs use to file a grievance electronically. Paper forms are also available for those who prefer a manual process. The grievance process is designed to help address IP complaints regarding any aspect of institutional life, whether the issue relates to the application of policies or procedures, the conditions of confinement or the actions of institutional staff.

While inspecting LECl, the CFIS team focused on ensuring that the institution is systematically logging and tracking grievances in ViaPath, is responding promptly to grievances and is responding within policy guidelines. CFIS inspectors also looked for any indication of retaliation against IPs who filed grievances, checked to ensure that the appeals process is accessible, looked for trends with grievances, and viewed grievance responses to ensure that they properly quoted the policy/policies being cited in them.

Of the grievances reviewed, most were denied due to insufficient evidence. One property-related grievance was withdrawn and resolved in favor of the IP. The grievances reviewed were correctly logged in ViaPath, were responded to on time, and appropriately cited policies. CFIS verified that IPs had access to ViaPath on their tablets.

Among the grievances, CFIS discovered one that mentioned a recent inmate death. This grievance is discussed more fully below, under the header "Special incidents."

Food services

The food-services area was inspected to ensure compliance with DRC Policy 60-FSM-02, Food Service Operations, and DRC 60-FSM-06, Safety and Health Protection for Staff and Incarcerated Individuals Assigned to Food Service.

Meal sampling

CFIS staff sampled a lunch of sloppy joe, a baked potato, a salad, Italian dressing, white bread, margarine and a brownie. The portion sampled met DRC standards for taste and appearance. Temperatures for all items served and for the portions sampled were within DRC Policy 60-FSM-02 (hot foods at or above 140 degrees, cold foods at or below 40 degrees).

Observations

The food-service area was clean and orderly, with the winter menu posted. Incarcerated food-services workers were appropriately dressed in protective clothing (hair and beard nets, rubber gloves). Uniforms appeared to be clean. LECI food services offers the IN2Work program, designed to teach skills and provide certifications needed for careers in the culinary arts. Participants were actively engaged in meal preparation.

The kitchen tool room was inspected, and all tools were accounted for. Tools not present had been replaced with a chit, an object placed on the peg where the tool should be. A tool control log was also being used to indicate the individual to whom a tool was assigned, serving as a safety check. The back-dock area was clean and free of offensive odors. The area surrounding the trash compactor was free of debris. No rodents or pests were observed in the food-services area or on the dock.

Coolers and freezers were in proper working order; storage areas were clean and organized. The dish room was clean, with dish-cleaning water temperatures in compliance with DRC 60-FSM-02. Overall sanitation was appropriate; proper disinfectants were being utilized to clean the area. CFIS inspectors verified that food-services staff and IP staff had completed sanitation and hygiene training to ensure compliance with 60-FSM-06. Safe Serv Certification was also verified. CFIS spoke to eight IPs in the food-services area; they voiced no concerns about violations of DRC policy.

Educational or rehabilitative program

DRC, through the Ohio Central School System (OCSS) and per DRC 57-EDU-08, offer educational programs designed to meet the needs of IPs. The programs include adult education courses, vocational training and technical training, all of which incorporate technology in the programming. Collectively, the programs are designed to enhance IP employability upon release. On the date of the inspection, LECI's programs included:

- Education:
 - Adult basic education
 - General educational development (GED)
 - Pre-GED
 - Special education
- Career/Technical:
 - Business-operations service and support
 - Commercial baking
 - Computer-based business class
 - Construction technology
 - Food management and production service
- Apprenticeships:
 - Alterations tailor
 - Electrician
 - Heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC)
 - Janitor
 - Landscape management
 - Painter

- Plumber
- Recovery operator
- Stationary engineer
- Water treatment plant operator

Lebanon Correctional's GED programs and post-secondary opportunities provided ample educational opportunities for IPs. The CFIS team verified that LECl staff were tracking and monitoring enrollment and attendance. The facility provided accommodations for IPs with learning disabilities. Instructors' qualifications were verified. No ODRC policy (57-EDU-08) violation was noted or observed.

NON-MANDATED AREAS OF INSPECTION

Medical services

CFIS toured and inspected the medical department and spoke to the staff. The department has a dental area, pill call area, examination rooms and an infirmary. It also has office space for the medical staff (doctor, administrators and nurse practitioners). IPs were receiving medical treatment during the inspection. The department was fully staffed, and the area was extremely clean. Appropriate health-care and preventative-care signage was posted.

Recreation

CFIS toured and inspected the recreation department and spoke with the director. The area appeared to prioritize IP health and was clean and well-maintained. Weight training and exercise equipment, a full-length basketball court and an outdoor rec area were available for IP use. Appropriate cleaning disinfectants were being used. The restrooms were inspected, with no sanitation issues to report. Toilets, sinks and water fountain were in good working order. No major issues were observed. No violations of DRC 77-REC-01, Recreation and Leisure Time Activities, were observed or reported.

Library/ Law library

LECl has an adequate library that includes a law library. The area was clean and organized. The library offers IP access to the Ohio Means Jobs website, which provides specialized employment services, including re-entry resume services. The general population could access LexisNexis. Re-entry information was posted, as were hours of operation. The librarian was knowledgeable and expressed pride in her area. No violations of DRC 58-LIB-01, Comprehensive Library Services, were observed or reported.

Visitation area

The visitation area provides IPs and their families a setting designed to encourage interaction among family members, especially children. LECl's visitation area had a colorful and adequately stocked children's engagement area. There also was a vending area where visitors can purchase snacks. The visitation area was clean and organized, with adequate seating. LECl offers visitation on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays (12:30–3:30 p.m. and 4:30-7:30 p.m.) and Saturdays and Sundays (8:30–11:30 a.m. and 12:30–3:30 p.m.). No violations of DRC 76-VIS-01, Incarcerated Person (IP) Visitation, were observed or reported.

Transitional Programing Unit (TPU)

The TPU, a restrictive housing area, was clean and orderly. Inspectors verified that IPs housed in the unit had access to their tablets. A peer-support team was present and actively engaged. Peer supporters are IPs trained by the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health to assist other IPs who may be in crisis. They use their training and their shared experiences with mental health and/or substance-use issues to assist other IPs. Support occurs within the housing unit, outside the clinical setting, and is meant to promote sustained recovery. Peer supporters can become certified before being released, enhancing their employability.

The unit had adequate reading materials, and religious services were available. Also offered were recovery services (e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous) and mental-health programs. CFIS inspectors examined the TPU sign-in log, DRC 6011, and confirmed that the executive staff was performing rounds in compliance with DRC 50-PAM-02. No sanitation issues were reported or observed during the inspection. Cells that were inspected were in appropriate condition. The TPU laundry area was clean and organized; proper cleaning products were being used.

CFIS reviewed eight DRC 4118 documents. A DRC 4118 is a report on each IP's essential daily functions, including acceptance/refusal of meals, personal hygiene and recreational activities. Each document was signed or initialed as verification the staff member had provided these necessities. All reports reviewed were correctly completed, with dates, times, and staff initials documenting the care given. The unit was appropriately staffed with officers, a sergeant, and a lieutenant. CFIS spoke to numerous incarcerated adults housed in TPU; none reported any concerns about DRC policy violations.

MISCELLANEOUS INSPECTION MATTERS

Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA)

Congress passed PREA in 2003 to provide for the analysis of the incidence and effects of prison rape in federal, state and local institutions. PREA also provides information, resources, recommendations and funding to protect IPs from sexual assaults and rapes. PREA applies to all ODRC institutions, including privately operated and juvenile correctional facilities.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol, the law enforcement agency responsible for investigating criminal offenses inside correctional institutions, tracks sexual assaults using the PREA incident system. CFIS reviewed Lebanon Correctional's reports from that system and found no substantiated cases. PREA signs were appropriately posted throughout the facility (e.g. housing units, recreation, library, visitation, education, front entrance and medical services). Contact information for a local rape-crisis center was posted. No violations of ODRC policy were observed or reported.

Staff recruiting and retention

LECI's vacancy rate was greater than 10%. Information regarding hiring events and job openings was posted.

Naloxone (Narcan) going-home kits

LECI offered Narcan kits to IPs on the day of their release. Each kit contained two doses of naloxone and 10 fentanyl testing strips. The kits are stored in Harm Reduction Vending Machines, which are placed in a discrete area. LECI was in compliance with DRC 10-SAF-20, Naloxone Safety and Health procedures.

Administrative duty officer (ADO) reports

CFIS reviewed ADO reports (50-PAM-02) from the week before the inspection, which LECl provided per the CFIS team's request. An ADO report is completed daily by the designated executive staff tasked with completing inspection rounds. The designated rounds cover food services, visitation, a housing unit, the recreation area, and any other area designated by the warden. Upon completion of the ADO rounds, the designated staff writes a report of the findings and submits it to the warden's office for review. The report includes the date and time of the rounds, the areas visited, observations, and any concerns and/or recommendations. The ADO reports reviewed by CFIS were completed on time and in accordance with policy. No DRC policy (50-PAM-02) violation was noted or observed.

Security/Facilities

Units were appropriately staffed by correctional officers, a case manager, a sergeant and a unit manager. Units were clean and organized. Restrooms were clean, with all showers, sinks and toilets in good working condition. Units had essential items, including a washer and dryer, ice machines, water fountains, and microwaves. All appeared to be in good working order. Cleaning products and supplies were secured appropriately. Dayrooms had televisions and recreational games and activities. Fire evacuations plans were posted in highly visible areas. Unit team pictures were posted, as was programming information (e.g. staff/incarcerated adult facilitator, date and time of program). A review of the DRC 6011 staff sign-in book showed that executive staff appeared to be conducting rounds according to DRC policy 50-PAM-02, Daily Rounds. During the inspection, no safety or security issues were observed. None of the IPs interviewed raised a concern that would constitute a DRC policy violation.

Special incidents

While reviewing hard copies of LECl grievances, CFIS inspectors noted one that referred to an inmate death on Oct. 28, 2025. In the grievance, an IP who said he was related to the decedent alleged that the decedent had been neglected and had not received adequate medical care. The grievance was denied due to insufficient evidence, and it was not appealed to the chief inspector.

After the initial inspection, the CFIS team asked LECl staff about the autopsy and toxicology reports. LECl's institutional inspector confirmed the death and stated that the inmate had a pre-existing medical condition. When LECl later received the final autopsy and toxicology reports, the cause of death was listed as complications from cardiac arrest due to acid intoxication.

In an unrelated case, the Ohio Attorney General's Office (AGO) in December 2025 received correspondence from an attorney for inmate Isaiah Phillips requesting that Phillips be moved from LECl to another facility. The attorney alleged that a cousin of Phillips', LaSalle Allen, died on Dec. 1, 2025, "as a result of [an] altercation" with corrections officers. The attorney alleged that Phillips reacted to Allen's death, "had an altercation with some officers" and was put "in the hole" at LECl. Before the AGO could reach out to inquire about the incident, ODRC contacted the AGO to inform the office that Phillips, as requested, had been transferred to another facility.

Upon learning of the incident, CFIS reached out to Warden Marinich, who reported the following: On Nov. 29, 2025, inmate Allen got into an altercation with his cellmate in the TPU. Staff deployed oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray in an effort to separate the two IPs, but it did not work. Allen was removed from the cell and

placed on the ground. Once on the ground, Allen remained combative, and staff again deployed OC spray to gain compliance. Allen was ultimately placed in a stare chair, which is a restraint chair designed to protect the staff and the IP from injuries. Allen was taken to medical services, where he continued to be combative with staff and medical personnel. At some point, Allen was able to remove himself from the stare chair.

Based on their observations, LECI staff members believed Allen to be under the influence of an unknown substance. The nurse on duty left the area to retrieve Narcan (Naloxone). During the nurse's absence, and while he was on the ground after freeing himself from the stare chair, Allen experienced a medical emergency. Staff called an ambulance; he was transported to a hospital, where he was later pronounced dead. Methamphetamine and paper soaked in an unknown substance were discovered concealed between his toes. As of the date of this report, Allen's autopsy and toxicology reports were not yet available, Warden Marinich agreed to inform CFIS when LECI receives them.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol is investigating Allen's death. Two staff members were placed on administrative leave pending completion of the investigation of the incident.

During its follow up, CFIS will review records related to both inmate deaths to ensure compliance with DRC Policy 66-ILL-02 and DRC 2602(DRC checklist), which dictates the procedure to be followed when there is an IP death.

CONCLUSION

Overall, LECI was clean. Its staff members were professional, had an extensive understanding of correctional operations and were able to answer questions asked of them. The facility appeared to have successfully implemented processes and programs aimed at fostering positive, pro-social behavior among IPs. Programming and vocational services were designed to equip IPs with the skills necessary for a smooth reintegration into society upon their release. CFIS's follow-up inspection will focus on the two inmate deaths, including a review to determine whether DRC policies were followed, and any related concerns that may develop.



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