

**REPORT ON THE
INSPECTION OF**

SOUTHEASTERN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

INSPECTION DATE: NOV. 18, 2025



DAVE YOST
OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL



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 Southeastern Correctional Institution (SCI).

GENERAL OVERVIEW

On Nov. 14, 2025, CFIS completed an initial inspection of SCI. Southeastern staff members were notified the day prior that CFIS would arrive at 9 a.m. the following day. The CFIS team consisted of Dr. James Wesson, chief of inspections, and Deborah Drummond, lead inspector.

SCI is a minimum- and medium-security state prison for adult men located in Lancaster, Ohio. The facility, which opened in 1980, has a capacity of 2,034 inmates. On the date of the inspection, SCI housed 1,552 incarcerated people (IPs). The facility has an open-dormitory style, split into units. Each unit houses roughly 240 incarcerated adults.

SCI's most recent IMA took place on Jan. 28-30, 2025. The annual audit is conducted by an independent auditor who 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 educational programs are also audited.

In the 2025 IMA, SCI was found to be in compliance with 60 of the applicable 64 mandatory standards and 429 of the applicable 436 non-mandatory ACA standards. SCI was in compliance with 66 of the 74 applicable Ohio standards. The table below illustrates SCI's 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	98.4%	98.2%	98.4%
Ohio Standards	89.2%	93.8%	97%

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 SCI, CFIS also inspected:

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

Before the inspection, CFIS requested that SCI staff produce copies of the previous seven days of administrative duty officer (ADO) reports and the 15 most recent grievances. Upon arrival, CFIS members were greeted by SCI staff and went immediately to the warden's conference room for an opening meeting with Warden Norman Robinson and his executive staff.

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 incarcerated person (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 appeal determination 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 grievance 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.

During its inspection, CFIS focused on ensuring that SCI staff was systematically logging and tracking grievances in ViaPath, responding promptly to grievances, and responding within policy guidelines. CFIS also looked for any indication of retaliation against IPs who filed grievances, checked to ensure that the appeals process is accessible, looked for any trends within grievances, and viewed response(s) to ensure that each appropriately quoted the policy cited.

CFIS reviewed 15 grievances and ICRs. The SCI staff responded to all 15 grievances on time and appropriately quoted the applicable policy or policies. There were no indications of retaliatory behavior by SCI staff, nor did CFIS observe any trends suggesting any problem at the institution. Inspectors verified that all IPS had access to the grievance process on their tablets.

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.¹

¹ All DRC policies referenced herein are available at: <https://drc.ohio.gov/about/resource/policies-and-procedures/3-policies-and-procedures>.

Meal sampling

CFIS staff sampled a lunch meal of fish, macaroni and cheese, coleslaw, tartar sauce, bread and a brownie. Temperatures for all items served and for the portions sampled were within ODRC Policy 60-FSM-02 (hot foods at or above 140 degrees, cold foods at or below 40 degrees).

Observations

The food-services area was extremely clean and orderly, with the correct menu posted. Incarcerated food-service workers were appropriately dressed in protective clothing (hair and beard nets, rubber gloves). Uniforms were neat and appeared to be clean. SCI's food services offer 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's tool room was inspected, and all tools were accounted for. Tools not present had been replaced with a chit, which is an object placed on the peg where the tool should be. A tool control log was being used to indicate the individual to whom the 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 the dock. Coolers and freezers were in proper working order, and storage areas were clean and organized. The dish room was clean, and dish-cleaning water temperatures were in compliance with DRC Policy 60-FSM-02.

Overall sanitation was appropriate, as proper disinfectants were being utilized to clean the area. CFIS verified completion of sanitation and hygiene training for food-services staff and incarcerated food-services workers to ensure compliance with 60-FSM-06. Safe Serv Certification was also verified. CFIS spoke to multiple IPs in the food-services area; none reported any concerns that would constitute a violation of ODRC policy. No ODRC policy violations were noted or observed during the inspection.

Educational or rehabilitative program

ODRC, through the Ohio Central School System (OCSS), offers educational programs designed to meet the needs of incarcerated people. The programs include adult education courses, vocational training, and technical training, all of which incorporate technology into the programming. Collectively, the programs are designed to enhance the incarcerated population's employability upon release.

On the day of the inspection, the facility had the following academic and career programs:

- Education:
 - Adult basic education (academic)
 - General educational development (GED)
 - Pre-GED (academic)
 - Special education (academic)
 - Certificate and degree programs through Sinclair Community College
- Career/Technical:
 - Assembly technician
 - Building maintenance/repair
 - Carpentry
 - Electrical wiring

- Plumbing
- Stationary engineer
- Welding
- Wastewater treatment plant operator
- Apprenticeships:
 - Alterations tailor
 - Animal trainer
 - Heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC)
 - Horticulture
 - Materials coordinator
 - Recovery operator

SCI's literacy and GED programs appropriately served the needs of the population. SCI's vocational training aligned with the current job market, and post-secondary education opportunities were accessible. Instructors had the appropriate qualifications, and the education material and technology were up-to-date. SCI staff was appropriately tracking enrollment and monitoring attendance. Accommodations were made for IPs with learning disabilities.

The education and career technical areas were clean and organized. Multiple IPs were involved in programming. The vocational area appeared to have the appropriate safety protocols in place. It was well-maintained, with no violations of DRC policy/policies noted or observed. No violations of DRC 57-EDU-08, Education Staff Credentials, were observed or reported.

NON-MANDATED AREAS OF INSPECTION

Medical services

CFIS inspected the medical department and spoke to staff. The department consists of a dental area, pill call area, examination rooms and an infirmary. There is office space to accommodate the medical staff (doctor, administrators, and nurse practitioners). IPs were receiving medical treatment during the inspection, and the area was extremely clean. Appropriate health-care and preventative-care signage was posted.

Recreation

CFIS inspected the recreation area and spoke with the director. The area was clean and well-maintained. IT had new weight equipment, a full-length basketball court, and an outdoor recreation area. All equipment was in new or in good condition. Appropriate cleaning products were being used. Sports leagues, music rooms and community-service projects were available. The restroom area was clean; no issues were reported or observed. No violations of ODRC 77-REC-01, Recreation and Leisure Time Activities, were observed or reported.

Library/Law library

SCI has a newly renovated library, which includes a law library. The area was clean and organized. In the library, IPs can access LexisNexis and Ohio Means Jobs, which provides specialized employment services, including re-entry resume support. Re-entry information and library hours of operation were visibly posted. The librarian was knowledgeable and expressed pride in her area. No violations of ODRC 58-LIB-01, Comprehensive Library Services, were observed or reported.

Visitation area

SCI's visitation area was recently updated and appeared to allow IPs and their visitors to engage in a setting designed to encourage positive interaction among visitors, especially children. The visitation area was clean and organized. Seating was appropriate; it encouraged family engagement. A vending area was available for visiting family members to purchase snacks. The visitation area, with a log-cabin theme, had an area for children to read and play. There was a small, secure outdoor area for visitation. SCI offers visiting hours seven days a week – from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and noon to 3 p.m. No violations of ODRC 76-VIS-01, Incarcerated Person (IP) Visitation, were observed or reported.

Specialized housing

CFIS toured and inspected SCI's Normalcy Unit, which is a specialized unit. IPs are admitted to the unit via application only. A team of IPs, with SCI staff oversight, screens and processes all applications. The unit has four wireless telephones accessible to the IPs, which is unique to SCI. It also has a large programming area, and a partnership with Canine Companions, through which IPs train service dogs. Dogs arrive at the facility at roughly 6 months of age and stay for one year. The animals are then sent to a private facility for additional training, after which they return to SCI for graduation. IP dog handlers must have experience with dogs and a calm temperament. The program, according to SCI staff, calms IPs, keeps them busy, provides a sense of responsibility and allows them give back to the community.

The Normalcy Unit was clean and organized. Staff members were professional. No sanitation issues were observed or reported; all toilets and sinks appeared to be in working order. The washer, dryer and ice machine appeared to be in working order. The unit was appropriately staffed with two officers, a sergeant, a case manager and the unit manager. No violations of ODRC policy were observed or reported.

Transitional Programing Unit (TPU)

The TPU, a restrictive housing area, was clean and orderly. CFIS verified that IPs in unit had access to their tablets. During the inspection, a peer-support team was actively engaged. Peer supporters are IPs trained by the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health to assist other IPs who may be in crisis. Peer supporters use this 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 also can become certified before they are released, enhancing their employability.

The unit had adequate reading materials, with religious services available. Recovery services (Alcoholics Anonymous) and menta-health programs were offered. CFIS examined the unit's ODRC 6011 staff sign-in log and confirmed that executive staff were performing rounds in accordance with ODRC policy 50-PAM-02. No sanitation issues were reported or observed during the inspection. Cells that were inspected were in appropriate condition.

The CFIS team reviewed multiple DRC 4118 reports. A DRC 4118 documents each IP's daily functions, including meal rejection/acceptance, personal hygiene and recreational activities. A staff member signs or initials the 4118 to confirm that these necessities were provided. All 4118s reviewed were completed accurately; they included dates, times and staff initials. A review of the DRC 6011 log confirmed that the executive staff conducted rounds pursuant to policy (DRC 50-PAM-02). The TPU was appropriately staffed with three officers, a sergeant, a case manager and a lieutenant. CFIS spoke to numerous incarcerated adults housed in TPU; no one reported any issues or concerns that would indicate a DRC policy violation.

MISCELLANEOUS INSPECTION MATTERS

Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA)

Congress passed the Prison Rape Elimination Act 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 incarcerated people from prison sexual assaults and rapes. PREA applies to all DRC institutions, including privately operated and juvenile correctional facilities.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP), the law enforcement agency responsible for investigating criminal offenses inside correctional institutions, tracks sexual assaults using the PREA incident system. CFIS reviewed the facility's PREA 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). Contact information for a local rape-crisis center was posted. No violation of DRC policy was observed or reported.

Staff recruiting and retention

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

Naloxone (Narcan) kits

SCI 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. SCI complied with DRC 10-SAF-20, Naloxone Safety and Health Procedures.

Administrative Duty Officer (ADO) reports

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

Security/Facilities

Units were appropriately staffed by two correctional officers, a case manager, a sergeant and a unit manager. Units and restrooms were clean, with all showers, sinks and toilets in working condition. Units had essential items, such as a washer and dryer, ice machines, water fountains and microwaves. All were in working order.

Fire evacuations plans were posted in highly visible areas. Unit team pictures and programming information (e.g. staff/incarcerated adult facilitator, date and time of program) were posted. Cleaning products and supplies were secured appropriately. Dayrooms had televisions, recreational games and activities. After reviewing the DRC 6011 (DRC sign-in logbook), the CFIS team determined that SCI staff appears to be

conducting rounds according to policy (50-PAM-02). SCI had appropriate information (on PREA, library, education, recreation hours, etc.) posted throughout the facility.

No safety or security issues were reported or observed during the inspection. SCI appeared to be fully staffed, and the officers' presence was observed. None of the IPs interviewed raised a concern that would constitute a violation of DRC policy.

CONCLUSION

SCI was well-maintained, and the staff exhibited a high degree of professionalism and expertise in correctional procedures. Staff members competently addressed all inquiries and provided the requested information efficiently. The facility demonstrated operational efficiency. SCI promotes pro-social behavior and offers programs and services focused on preparing IPs for successful re-entry into society.



DAVE YOST
OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL

**REPORT ON THE
INSPECTION OF
SOUTHEASTERN
CORRECTIONAL
INSTITUTION**

Correctional Facilities Inspection Services

30 E. Broad St. 17th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215
800-282-0515
www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov