

**REPORT ON THE
INSPECTION OF**

ALLEN-OAKWOOD CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

INSPECTION DATE: DEC. 11, 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 Allen-Oakwood Correctional Institution (AOI).

GENERAL OVERVIEW

On Dec. 11, 2025, CFIS completed an initial inspection of AOCI. Warden Ryan Walters was notified on the day before that CFIS would arrive at 9 a.m. the following day. CFIS inspectors were at AOCI for about five hours. The CFIS team consisted of Dr. James Wesson, chief of inspections, and Deborah Drummond, lead inspector.

AOCI is a minimum-/maximum-security-level correctional facility for adult men in Lima, Ohio. It has a maximum capacity of 1,645. On the day of the inspection, it housed 1,540 incarcerated persons (IPs). The facility is broken into units, each housing 140 incarcerated adults in cells with double occupancy. The facility opened in 1988.

AOCI's most recent internal management audit took place June 24-26, 2025. The annual audit is conducted by an independent auditor, who examines a facility's compliance with ACA's 5th Edition Standards and the 2025 Ohio Standards, in preparation for the next ACA audit. All institutional work, industry and vocational education programs are also audited.

In the 2025 IMA, AOCI was found in compliance with all 57 applicable mandatory ACA standards and 431 of the 435 applicable non-mandatory standards. AOCI was in compliance with 60 of the 74 applicable Ohio Standards. The table below illustrates AOCI's rate of compliance with ACA and Ohio Standards over the past three years:

IMA Audit Scores	2025	2024	2023
ACA Mandatory	95%	96%	100%
ACA Non-mandatory	99%	98%	99.3%
Ohio Standards	79.7%	90%	96.9%

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 AOCI, the CFIS team also inspected:

- Medical services
- Recreation
- Library/Law library
- Visitation area
- Specialized housing
- Residential treatment unit (RTU)
- Transitional programming unit (TPU)

Before arriving, CFIS inspectors requested copies of the previous seven days of AOCI's administrative duty officer (ADO) reports and the 15 most recent grievances. Upon arrival at the facility, the CFIS team was greeted by AOCI staff. After brief introductions in the warden's conference room, the inspection, led by Warden Walters, 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 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 to file an ICR from the date of the incident. 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 decision, the IP can appeal the institutional inspector's decision to the chief Inspector. The Office of the Chief Inspector, housed within DRC's central office, makes the final determination for every grievance that is 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 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 staff.

At Allen-Oakwood Correctional, the CFIS team focused on ensuring that the institution is systematically logging and tracking grievances in ViaPath, the staff is promptly responding to grievances, and the grievance responses are within policy guidelines. CFIS also looked for any signs of retaliation against IPs who filed grievances, checked to ensure that the appeals process is accessible, looked for trends among grievances, and reviewed grievance responses to ensure that policies were accurately cited.

CFIS reviewed 15 grievances, all of which received thorough investigations, were responded to on time, and appropriately quoted policy. In cases in which an IP failed to provide sufficient evidence, grievances were appropriately denied. Grievances and ICRs were appropriately logged and tracked electronically using the DRC system.

The AOCI grievance process was readily available to IPs. It ran efficiently and according to DRC policy.

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

During the inspection, CFIS staff sampled a lunch of sloppy joe, a baked potato, rotini noodles, a garden salad, Italian dressing, a cooked veggie, white bread, margarine and a brownie. 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-services area was clean and orderly, and the winter menu was posted. Incarcerated food-service workers were appropriately dressed in protective clothing (hair and beard nets, rubber gloves). Uniforms appeared to be neat and clean. AOCI 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 were replaced with a chit, an object used to mark where the tool should be. A tool control log was being used to identify the IP to whom a tool is 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-service areas or on the dock.

Coolers and freezers were in proper working order, and storage areas were cleaned and organized. The dish room appeared clean; dish-cleaning water temperatures complied with DRC 60-FSM-02. Overall sanitation was appropriate, with proper disinfectants being used to clean the area. The CFIS team verified completion of sanitation and hygiene training for food-services staff and incarcerated staff, ensuring compliance with 60-FSM-06. Safe Serv Certification was also verified. The CFIS team spoke to 12 IPs in the food-services area. None reported any major concerns.

Educational or rehabilitative program

DRC, through the Ohio Central School System (OCSS), offers 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, AOCI's academic and career programs included:

- Education:
 - Adult basic education
 - General educational development (GED)
 - Pre-GED
 - Special education
 - Pre-high school education
 - Advanced job training through Sinclair Community College
- Apprenticeships:
 - Animal trainer
 - Heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC)
 - Janitor
 - Plumber

- Quality-control inspector
- Stitcher
- Tailor
- Weld fitter
- Career/Technical:
 - Forklift operator
 - Horticulture
 - Plumbing
 - Resilient flooring

CFIS inspectors focused on AOCI's literacy and GED programs, considered whether the vocational training offered aligns with the current job market, reviewed the post-secondary education opportunities accessible to the population and the instructors' qualifications, and whether the educational material and technology were up-to-date. All appeared to meet the needs of the IPs and the programming. Staff was tracking enrollment and attendance, and accommodations were available to IPs with learning disabilities. Programs reviewed appeared to provide IPs with the skills needed to obtain employment immediately upon release. No deficiencies were observed or reported.

NON-MANDATED AREAS OF INSPECTION

Medical services

CFIS toured the medical department and spoke to staff members. The department has a dental area, pill call area, examination rooms and an infirmary. There is office space for the medical staff (doctor, administrators and nurse practitioners). IPs were receiving medical treatment during the inspection, and the area was extremely clean. There were appropriate health-care and preventative-care memos in the medical area. The area was fully staffed.

Recreation

CFIS toured the recreation department and spoke with the director. The area was clean and well-maintained, and appeared to prioritize IP health. Weight training and exercise equipment, a full-length basketball court and an outdoor rec area were available for IP use. All equipment was in good working order; no major issues were observed. Appropriate cleaning disinfectants were being used. The restrooms were inspected. Toilets, sinks and the water fountain were in good working order, and there were no sanitation issues to report. The department has an extensive music room and a program that accommodates 19 musical bands. AOCI stores Narcan in the recreation area, which allows the staff to respond quickly to emergencies. No violations of DRC 77-REC-01, Recreation and Leisure Time Activities, were observed or reported.

Library/Law library

AOCI has a newly renovated library, which includes a law library. The area was clean and organized. In the library, IPs can access the Ohio Means Jobs website, which provides specialized employment services, including re-entry resume services. The general population can also access LexisNexis. Re-entry information and hours of operation were posted. 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 that encourages family interaction, especially with children. The area was clean and organized; seating was appropriate. A vending area was available to purchase snacks. Visitation is offered daily from 7:45 to 10:30 a.m. and noon to 2:45 p.m. No violations of DRC 76-VIS-01, Incarcerated Person (IP) Visitation, were observed or reported.

Specialized housing

CFIS inspected AOCI's Normalcy Unit, a specialized unit focused on mirroring life outside of incarceration. The unit aims to reduce the institutional feel and promote rehabilitation. On the date of the inspection, the unit housed 135 IPs. Staff members seemed motivated as they discuss some new and creative plans for the unit.

Residential treatment unit (RTU)

CFIS inspected AOCI's RTU, a unit that caters to IPs suffering mental illness. IPs in the unit receive customized treatment for their mental-health needs. The unit, which can accommodate 120 IPs, offers programs to address anger management, illness management and recovery, criminal addictive thinking, and dialectical behavior therapy. RTU's programming provides ongoing mental-health case planning. The unit was fully staffed. No violations of DRC policy were reported or observed.

Transitional Programming Unit (TPU)

This restrictive housing area was clean and orderly. Inspectors verified that IPs 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 IPs who may be in crisis. They use their training and their shared experiences with mental-health and/or substance-use issues to help other IPs. Support is provided within the housing unit – outside the clinical setting – and is meant to promote sustained recovery. Peer supporters can become certified prior to release, enhancing their employability.

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

CFIS reviewed several DRC 4118 reports, which document each IP's essential daily functions, such as acceptance or refusal of meals, personal hygiene and recreational activities. Each DRC 4118 is signed or initialed by a staff member as confirmation that these necessities/services were provided. The DRC 4118s reviewed were completed appropriately; they included dates, times and staff initials documenting the care given. TPU was appropriately staffed with three corrections officers, a sergeant and a lieutenant. CFIS spoke to numerous IPs housed in TPU; none reported any major issues or concerns.

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 incarcerated people from sexual assaults and rapes. PREA applies to all DRC institutions, including privately operated and juvenile correctional facilities.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSP), the law enforcement agency responsible for investigating criminal offenses inside correctional institutions, tracks sexual assaults using the PREA incident system. CFIS inspectors reviewed Allen-Oakwood Correctional's PREA reports from the system and found no substantiated cases. PREA signs were appropriately posted throughout the facility (e.g. housing units, recreation area, library, visitation area, education area, front entrance and medical services). Contact information for a local rape-crisis center was posted within AOCl.

Staff recruiting and retention

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

Naloxone (Narcan) going-home kits

AOCl 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. AOCl was in compliance with DRC 10-SAF-20, Naloxone Safety and Health Procedures.

Administrative Duty Officer (ADO) reports

The CFIS team reviewed the ADO (50-PAM-02) reports from the week before the inspection. An ADO report is completed daily by the executive staff members tasked with completing inspection rounds. The designated rounds cover food service, visitation, housing units, the recreation area, and any other area designated by the warden. Upon completion of the rounds, the ADO summarizes his/her 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 on time and in accordance with policy. No violations of 50-PAM-02 were observed or reported.

Security/Facilities

None of the IPs interviewed during the inspection raised a concern that would constitute a violation of DRC policy. The CFIS team observed appropriate informational memos posted throughout the facility. (e.g. PREA, library, law library, recreation hours). Fire evacuation plans were posted in highly visible areas. Unit team pictures were posted, as was program information (staff/incarcerated adult facilitator, date and time of program). No safety or security issues were observed.

CONCLUSION

Overall, AOCI was clean and orderly. Administrative staff were professional and displayed a deep knowledge of corrections. Staff members easily answered the questions posed by CFIS. AOCI has invested in programs and processes designed to foster positive social behavior among the IPs. The facility offers strong programming and vocational services aimed at equipping IPs with the necessary tools and skills to successfully return to society.



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