

# Lessons from Maine

House Public Safety Committee Hearing  
December 17, 2025



# MINNESOTA DOC GOES TO MAINE

- DOC has continued to search for best practices through visits with other states.
  - Missouri, Montana, Maine
- In June 2024, DOC traveled to the state of Maine to observe and learn how their corrections agency operates.
  - Attendees included:
    - DOC executive team staff
    - Project managers
    - MCF-Faribault
      - Warden
      - Associate warden
      - Captains
      - Sergeants
      - Corrections Officers
- Shared takeaways and recommendations for implementation in our own agency.

# Maine Department of Corrections

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- **Mission:** Making our communities safer by reducing harm through supportive intervention, empowering change and restoring lives.
- **Core Values:** Accountability, Respect, Integrity, Teamwork, and Commitment
- **Number of state prisons:** 7
- **Prison population:** 1,675
- **Community supervision population:** 5,407
- **Lowest restrictive housing percentage in the country**



# MAINE MODEL OF CORRECTIONS

- Culture of wellness
  - Moving away from punishment
  - Rebuild and transform lives
- Foundational principles:
  - Normalization
  - Humanization
  - Destigmatization





# Privilege Level System

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- **Objective:** Provide incentives in response to pro-social behaviors and attitudes and active engagement in rehabilitative programs.
- Additional privileges awarded to individuals **based on pro-social behaviors**
  - **Behavior:** program participation, behavior and attitude, education, volunteerism, etc.
  - **Privileges:** Additional visits, out-of-cell recreation time, additional commissary, assignments as peer mentors, electronics, etc.
- Privilege level evaluated at least every six months

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

PRIVILEGE LEVEL CHART FOR MEDIUM CUSTODY HOUSING UNITS

	Level 1 (Green)	Level 2 (Yellow)	Level 3 (Red)	Level 4 (Blue)
<b>Activities/Gym</b>	No Access	Access based on availability, housing, and schedule	Increased access based on availability, housing, and schedule	Increased access based on availability, housing, and schedule
<b>Commissary</b>	\$25 limit/week	\$35 limit/week	\$50 limit/week	\$100 limit/week
<b>Dining/Social Events</b>	Not eligible	Not eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<b>Electronics</b>	Radio/CD Player, Fan (if allowed at facility)	Radio/CD Player, Fan (if allowed at facility)	Radio/CD Player, Fan (if allowed at facility), TV, Gaming console	Radio/CD Player, Fan (if allowed at facility), TV, Gaming console
<b>Library</b>	1 Day/Week, minimum, based on schedule	Increased access based on availability, housing, and schedule	Increased access based on availability, housing, and schedule	Increased access based on availability, housing, and schedule
<b>Positive Tickets/Grab Bucket</b>	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<b>Recreation/Dayroom Time Out-of-Room</b>	2 hours/day, minimum	3 hours/day, minimum	5 hours/day, minimum	6 hours/day, minimum
<b>Visits</b>	Access based on availability, housing, and schedule	Increased access based on availability, housing, and schedule	Increased access based on availability, housing, and schedule	Increased access based on availability, housing, and schedule
<b>Volunteer Assignment</b>	Not eligible	Not eligible	On-Unit Volunteer Opportunities	On/Off-unit Volunteer Opportunities
<b>Work Assignment</b>	On-unit, unpaid	On-unit, unpaid	On/Off-unit, pay eligible	Eligible for any job

# Unit Privilege Levels

- Level 1 – Green (most restrictive)
- Level 2 – Yellow (everyone starts here)
- Level 3 - Red
- Level 4 – Blue (most incentives)



# Honor Unit

Maine Staff and IP group planned and created the earned privilege unit

- Formerly a restrictive housing unit

Those that could apply to live in the unit:

- 5 years discipline free
- Work and volunteer from the unit
- Agree to resolve differences respectfully
- Community engagement must be maintained

Unit incentives included:

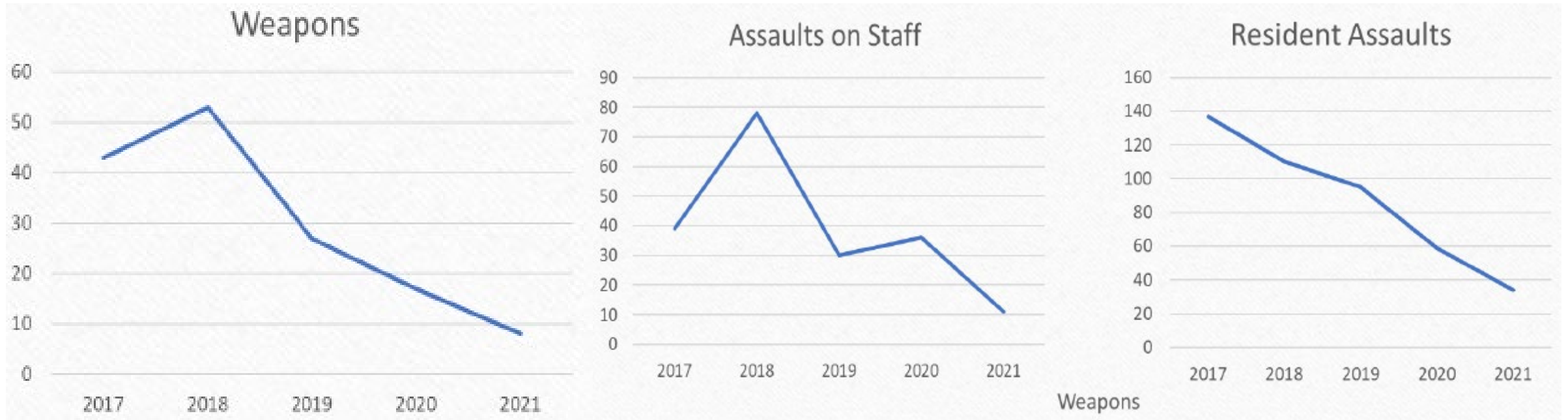
- Paint your own single cell
- Own fridge
- Cook as a community
- Doors open except for at night
- Buy items from Walmart
- Go outside and garden
- Much more

# Honor Unit

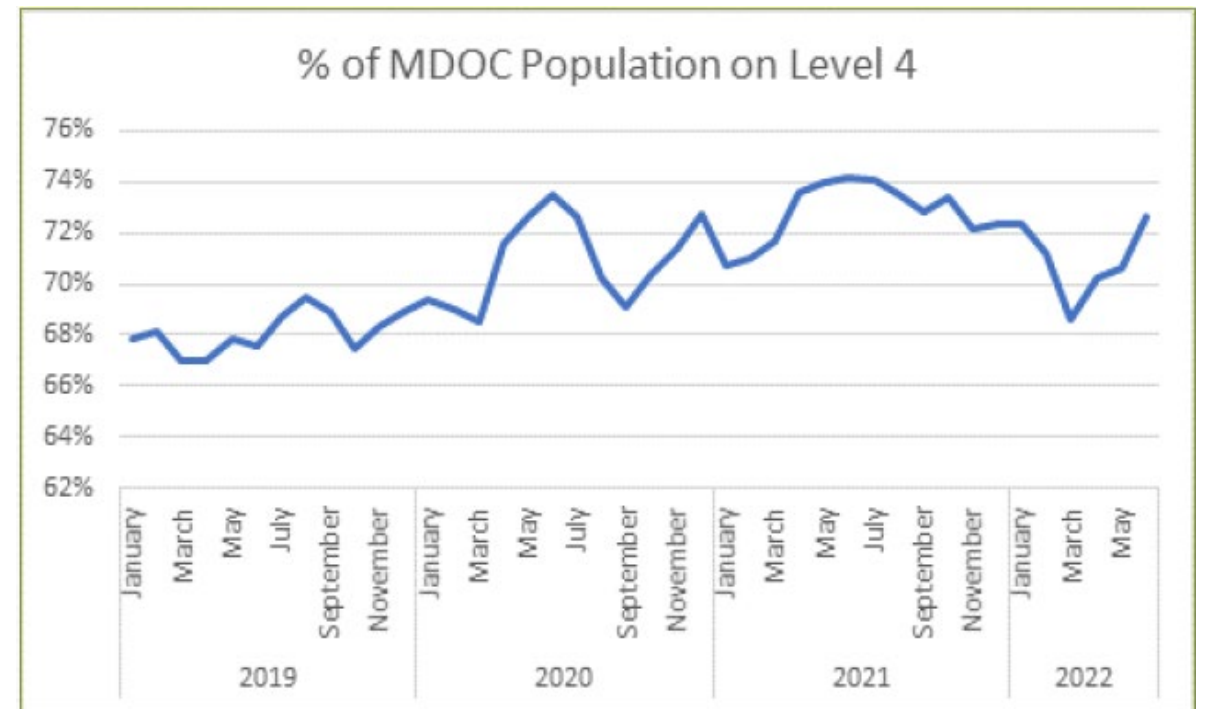
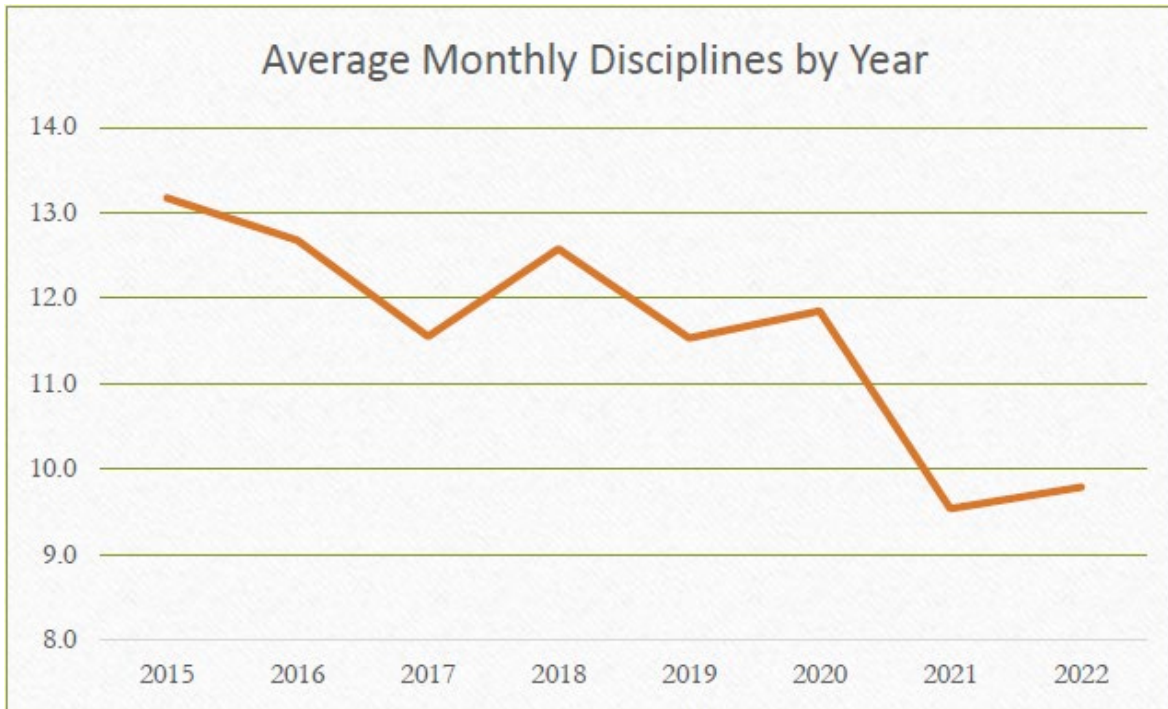
- Staff does rounds once each hour
  - No staff assigned a post on the flag
- IPs pulled their own money to purchase items for the unit
  - Such as their large screen TV
- IPs worked and volunteered outside of living quarters
- IPs meet with new staff, share what it is like to live life on the inside
- Men also meet once a week to discuss unit matters – men take turns facilitating the discussion
- RJ principles – donating to local faith groups or victim organizations



# Incentives Benefit BOTH the population and the staff



# Positive incentives work



# Takeaways from Maine

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- How can we work with the infrastructures we have to keep staff and incarcerated population safe and successful?
- Create more incentives for incarcerated population
- Move away from discipline model and towards privileges model
- Potential pilot of Honor Unit at MCF-Faribault

