SM6 / HM11 TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

The SM6/HM11 Task Force was formed to evaluate the costs, benefits, and feasibility of unifying New Mexico's jail and prison systems. The group **does not recommend unification at this time** and offers the following recommendations to address the top challenges in both justice systems.

STAFFING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Create a plan to address staffing shortages that includes a study of retention and hiring challenges, and strategies for growing the workforce.
- Provide funding for retention bonuses, salary increases, tuition reimbursements, etc. for corrections and detention professions, and track the impact of these incentives.
- Amend relevant statutes so Return to Work (RTW) policies can be implemented for retired public employees to return to work in corrections and detention facilities.

TRAINING AND UNIFIED PRACTICES ACROSS AGENCIES

- Develop, fund, and conduct a core training academy for detention staff through the NMCD Training Academy.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH RESOURCES - SUPPORT IN CUSTODY

- Create an internal guide for NMCD and NMC clarifying the skills and licensure necessary for various types of clinical jobs in state prisons and county jails.
- Examine certification for behavioral health professionals across local and state corrections systems to ensure standard qualifications and training.
- Partner with behavioral health agencies to create a workforce development and incentive plan.
- Continue to examine feasibility of regional behavioral health centers for jails / prisons.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH RESOURCES - SUPPORT IN COMMUNITIES

- Develop a strategic plan to attract skilled behavioral health professionals to New Mexico with a specific focus on those who work with justice-involved individuals.
- Support the expansion, staffing, and funding of Crisis Triage Centers across the state.
- Study the possibility of regional mental health facilities that serve as an alternative to incarceration.
- Support and encourage responsible agencies to conduct a gap analysis of provider access.
- Recognize housing as a critical component to rehabilitation and support state efforts to address housing insecurity and inaccessibility in all communities.

CROSS-AGENCY COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

- Review New Mexico Sentencing Commission membership, mission, and structure.
- Strengthen working relationships between county detention centers and NMCD.

CONNECTIVITY AND INTERNET BANDWIDTH

- Support Judiciary's effort to establish clear guidelines and standards for conducting remote hearings.
- Provide NMC and NMCD with the necessary support to implement court guidelines for remote hearings.
- Set aside broadband funding for criminal justice entities to improve connectivity for detention facilities and prisons.
- Establish a workgroup to develop a proposal for bandwidth expansion funds.
- Provide guidance to counties applying for bandwidth expansion funds on how to develop their requests to include the specific needs of justice partners.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND DATA SHARING

- Clarify statutes surrounding the role of the New Mexico Sentencing Commission in managing the statewide criminal justice data integration process.
- Expand the Justice Information Sharing Council to oversee data integration processes.
- Finalize data governance policies.

POPULATION TRACKING AND TREND ANALYSIS

- Support future research efforts and continued data analysis to uncover the context of New Mexico's prison and jail population trends (drivers, technical violations, projections for future growth).
- Work with existing research entities to identify gaps in research, better promote and disseminate work already done, and utilize research for decision-making.

FUNDING AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

- Consider statutory changes to ensure all users of detention services, including municipalities, cover the cost of detention for people arrested in their jurisdiction.
- Develop accurate and reliable billing system to reduce complexity of recovering costs for incarcerating, treating, supervising, and transporting individuals.
- Assess the funding challenges of the corrections system.