



NYC DOC JOINS NEW YORKERS IN HONORING PRIDE MONTH WE PROUDLY SUPPORT LGBTQIA+ PEOPLE ALL YEAR ROUND

Below are highlights of some of our continued efforts to support the LGBTQIA+ community:

SAFETY IN CUSTODY

- The Department houses individuals according to their gender identity. Transgender, Gender Non-Binary and Intersex (TGNBI) individuals have access to all types of housing across the Department. Individuals who hold these identities can also request to be housed the Special Consideration Unit (SCU) which houses only TGNBI individuals. Persons who apply for SCU housing and are not granted access have the right to appeal.
- Placement of TGNBI persons, and of all persons in custody, is based on a number of factors including their risk of sexual victimization or harassment as well as their history in custody.
- The Department has developed directives that describe the treatment, housing, and searching of TGNBI persons in custody, and continues to update them based on feedback from those with lived experiences. The Department also maintains a policy of nondiscrimination for all LGBTI-GNB- GNC individuals and enforces the Prison Rape Elimination Act.

CONFIDENTIAL AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNICATION

- In Summer 2021, the Department expanded its LGBTQIA+ services team by hiring an LGBTQIA+ services coordinator. This staff member will provide additional support to the Director of LGBTQ Initiatives in serving individuals in our care.
- In Spring 2021, the Department Launched its Pride Ambassadors program. Pride Ambassadors are both uniform and non-uniform staff who have volunteered to provide an extra level of support to the LGBTQIA+ population. They receive additional training and wear a pin on their uniform to ensure they are visible to the LGBTQIA+ population.
- In 2020, the Department established a dedicated hotline that connects LGBTQIA+ people in custody with trained DOC staff members. The hotline allows for people to discretely request services and support. Since September 2020, the hotline has received and responded to over 800 calls.
- Also in 2020, the Department rolled out an LGBTQIA+ services form on our tablets, providing another avenue for discreet communication. Since December 2020, the Department has received and responded to over 200 forms.



HEALTH CARE

- The Department actively works with its health partners to ensure the medical needs of the LGBTQIA+ community are addressed within the facilities and upon release.
- Hormone therapy is available to all individuals regardless of whether or not it was started initially in the community.
- Transgender individuals can now receive certain gender affirming surgeries while in custody.
- There is a direct referral service line for trans individuals leaving custody that assists with securing follow-up care.
- Social work services and advocacy hotlines are available to LGBTQIA+ individuals who have experienced sexual assault.

STAFF TRAINING

- Dir. Of LGBTQIA+ Initiatives has trained the entire Social Service Counseling and PREA staff in best practices when supporting LGBTQIA+ people in custody.
- The Department has developed an e-learning to train Pride Ambassadors to best support the LGBTQIA+ people in custody.
- The Department is in the final stages of completing an LGBTQIA+ training for all DOC staff and new recruits to complete.

WORKING WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- The Department continues to regularly engage with LGBTQIA+ advocates and community-based organizations to receive feedback and recommendations on LGBTQIA+ policy, programming and training initiatives and work their lived experiences into our work.
- The Department works with the city Public Defender agencies to assist LGBTQIA+ individuals in receiving supportive and affirming legal support.

RETURNING TO THE COMMUNITY

- In collaboration with Correctional Health Services and the Emergency Release Fund, LGBTQIA+ individuals who are being released from custody can be issued pre-paid cellphones to support their safe return to the community. The cellphones will assist those being released with accessing re-entry and community-based resources.
- The Department has developed an LGBTQIA+ Specific Re-Entry resource guide. This resource guide is available to all people in custody and includes resources for the most requested needs such as, housing, employment, crisis counseling, legal and treatment programs.