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## **New York City Department of Correction Graduates Largest Academy Class Ever**

### ***Academy Class Ushers in New Era; Agency Achieves Key Reform Agenda Milestones***

MANHATTAN, NY—The New York City Department of Correction (DOC) has achieved key milestones in its [reform agenda](#) and the Department’s latest graduating Academy class of 1,144 officers will sustain these reforms for years to come. Since 2014, with the support of the de Blasio administration, DOC has reimagined existing facilities by creating effective inmate educational opportunities and services, establishing comprehensive security camera coverage, and increasing safety while at the same time creating a more humane environment.

“Today’s class is entrusted with the future of our reforms,” said the Department of Correction Commissioner Cynthia Brann during the graduation ceremony held at The Theater at Madison Square Garden. “Our newest officers will grow our reforms and ensure the Department’s role in public safety by continuing to provide safer jails for staff and inmates alike.”

Members of the Department’s largest academy class join the ranks of DOC officers leading the way in national correctional reform. Under Mayor de Blasio, the Department answered the public’s calls to end punitive segregation for 16-17 year olds while also creating more therapeutic alternatives for the youngest in custody. At the same time the Department has stopped the overuse of punitive segregation by more than 85%. DOC was also the first in the nation to eliminate punitive segregation for young adults ages 18 to 21. By year’s end, the Department will offer up to 5 hours of daily programming through a variety of educational and vocational courses for every general population inmate.

Today’s graduates have been trained in self-defense tactics and de-escalation techniques including [Special Tactics and Responsible Techniques \(S.T.A.R.T.\)](#), a new training program with three days of interactive Defensive Tactics. Academy recruits studied a curriculum of Safe Crisis Management, Mental Health First Aid, Scenario-Based Assessment Training and Young Inmate Management and other correctional courses. And the Department’s Academy partner, John Jay College, offered courses in Team Building, Effective Written & Oral Communication,



*Click here for YouTube video*

Procedural Justice, and Mental Health Overview.

The November 2017 Class is very diverse – 46% African American, 31% Latino, 13% Caucasian, 6% Asian and 4% other ethnicities. The Recruit Candidate Officers come from all walks of life, each with a special journey to the Academy and the desire to serve the public. For example, Officer Kevin Persaud was on his way home from the Academy when he put his Academy CPR training into action. He stepped in at a local grocery store to do some shopping and administered CPR on a child who was choking in the store. There is Officer Tahnisha Barge who endured emergency invasive surgery at the start of Academy training. Her Academy Company was the main source of inspiration which brought her a speedy recovery and back to her studies within days.

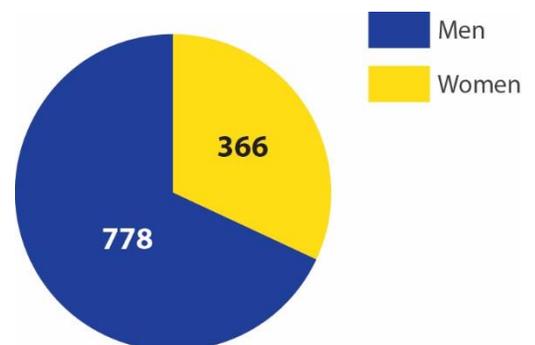
### DOC Reform Agenda

- **Keeping weapons, drugs and contraband out of DOC facilities**
  - [Weapons contraband finds are up 538%, and drug contraband finds are up 45%.](#)
- **Create an integrated classification and housing strategy**
  - The revolutionary housing classification tool HUB helps more safely house thousands of inmates.
- **Provide comprehensive camera coverage**
  - 100% camera coverage is now in all housing areas on Rikers Island.
- **Design effective inmate education opportunities and services**
  - [The DOC is providing programming up to 5 hours a day including weekends.](#)
- **Improve Leadership development and culture**
  - The first-ever DOC college cadet program, [Cadet Education, Empowerment and Development for Success program \(CEEDS\)](#), is now offered at John Jay College.
- **Design a recruitment, hiring and staff selection plan**
  - The Department continues to hire at a record pace, with 4,973 graduates hired since 2014.
- **Expand Targeted Training**
  - Officers now receive an additional 8 hours of training for de-escalation & engagement through Crisis Intervention & Conflict Resolution, Defensive Tactics, Safe-Crisis Management, Mental Health First Aid, Direct Supervision, and Young Inmate Management.
- **Implement operational performance metrics and analysis**
  - The DOC is now more data-driven to identify emerging issues, forecast outcomes, and promote transparency.

### **About the Graduating Class**

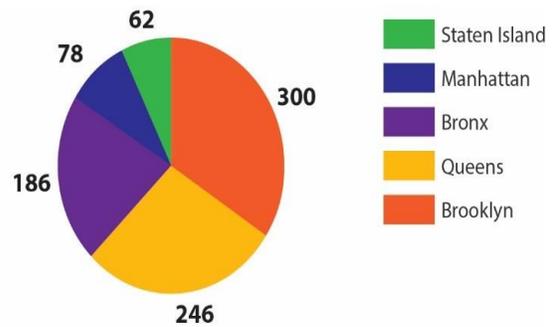
The graduating class of 778 men and 366 women comes from a wide range of backgrounds. This diverse class possesses the combined educational expertise of 29 master's degrees, 293 bachelor's degrees, and 211 associate's degree. The class has 85 members with a military background.

The Department of Correction is often regarded as a family, and is known for employing multiple generations of family members. This



recruit class is no different, with 90 recruits having family members who are currently on the job. These relatives include 14 cousins, 15 sisters, 26 brothers, 8 fathers, 14 mothers, 2 uncles, 6 aunts, 2 husbands, 1 wife, and 2 grandmothers.

The class includes recruit officers from every borough with Brooklyn – at 300 – contributing the largest number, and 246 from Queens, 186 from the Bronx, 78 from Manhattan, and 62 from Staten Island. In addition, there are 113 from Nassau County, 85 from Suffolk County, 38 from Westchester, 17 from Rockland County, 17 from Orange County, and 2 from Putnam County. The class valedictorian is Officer Lia Joseph. The salutatorian is Officer Luis Rodriquez.



### **About the New York City Department of Correction**

[The New York City Department of Correction \(DOC\)](#) provides for the care, custody, and control of persons accused of crimes or convicted and sentenced to one year or less of jail time. The Department manages 12 inmate facilities, nine of which are located on Rikers Island. In addition, the Department operates two hospital Prison Wards (Bellevue and Elmhurst hospitals) and court holding facilities in each borough. During Fiscal Year 2017, the Department handled over 58,000 admissions and managed an average daily inmate population of approximately 9,500 individuals. Our dedicated workforce of both uniformed and non-uniformed staff members represent the city's BOLDEST.