

The Carden Group / Indiana Department of Correction

Site Visit Summary – Round 2

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Overview

The Carden Group (TCG) had the opportunity to spend time with multiple facilities, Parole district personnel and administrative staff across the state. The goal is to better understand the current structure and culture of the Department, spotlighting what is working, areas of opportunity for improvement, opportunities for enhancing leadership and the work environment, barriers to culture improvement, and desired outcomes from leaders and team members.

During our visits we met with team members at many different levels and across departments in focus group/round table settings and individual conversations.

Our findings captured in this summary reflect overarching themes from a process perspective and from a skills, attitudes, and behaviors perspective.

Below are the key themes and insights that emerged.

Insights

Structure and Culture

- The people who work in the DOC have a strong sense of community and pride for what they do. People are willing to learn and to step up to help wherever needed.
- There is an overarching feeling of “team” within workgroups that can only grow stronger by creating more opportunities for individuals to cross pollinate with other departments.
- There is an increased sense of commitment to personal development and an appreciation for the vast amount of growth programs offered.
- Staffing challenges and the volume of new employees impact all departments and at all levels. These challenges tend to create additional workload and pressure for staff.
- Caseloads remain high within Parole Districts and non-custody staff at facilities.

What’s Working – Skills, Attitudes and Behaviors

- Admin teams review, share and discuss results from the engagement surveys and are working in a proactive manner to understand cause and find solutions.
- Safety is at the forefront of every action and interaction with attention to how staff can work together to minimize risk.
- Staff acknowledges the need to mentor and train new staff and the impact to the organization when that is missing.
- Some Parole Districts and Facilities are partnering to increase community and employee engagement.

What's Working - Processes

- Commissioner's agency-wide messaging and videos are welcomed and appreciated.
- Sharing the ability to cross train and move throughout the department to other roles is a plus for recruiting and retention.

Areas of Opportunity - Processes

- Although individual locations have some degree of autonomy when it comes to recruitment, hiring, training and on-boarding new staff, this also creates an opportunity to improve consistency in this area across the department with a goal of finding the best candidate matches to improve retention.
- Providing clear alignment in expectations and standards. Every bracket or section has different "rules of the game" as to how team members go about their roles and responsibilities. This leads to inconsistencies in communications, policy enforcement, accountability and understanding in the goals and objectives at the department level.
- Continuity of branding that incorporates the agency level goals that are reinforced by "Leading from Within" so staff can understand how initiatives blend together.
- There is an opportunity to create a cascading clarity pyramid and focused recognition that IDOC is all one team.
- Improve communication flow from all Supervisors to all line staff.

Areas of Opportunity – Skills, Attitudes and Behaviors

- Providing a better understanding of how to work with others – having the ability to recognize the various communication styles and knowing how to meet others where they are by flexing from your style. This will create stronger working relationships and improve communication overall.
- Focus on setting clear expectations – using a simple process to highlight main areas of focus will improve action and accountability.
- Creating a singular vision for the department with clarity and alignment from top leaders to front line staff.
- Taking action and addressing behaviors that are not aligned by planning and conducting difficult conversations.
- Managing conflict on a proactive basis to de-escalate early.
- Helping team members understand what they do and how what they do impacts the team, department and the community will help drive engagement and fulfillment.
- Increase supervisor visibility with more frequent interactions with staff across shifts will help build stronger relationships, respect and rapport.

Desired Outcomes

- Greater satisfaction with the Department resulting in improved physical and mental well-being.
- Creating clear expectations for goals, roles and responsibilities coupled with trust could lead to improved working relationships.
- Improved communication and transparency.
- Greater work/life balance through building a strong working environment with trust, respect and rapport present along with grace and understanding.
- More robust on the job and succession planning.
- Through creating alignment and setting expectations at all levels, team members will feel less pressure to “keep all the plates spinning” and have the authority to focus on the highest priority initiatives.
- Through empowerment, education and development, leaders can gain trust that their teams are competent and confident within their role. Team members can also feel confident and the autonomy to act without always needing their supervisor. This will help reduce stress and frustration at all levels.

Next Steps

The Carden Group:

- Develop a customized approach to facilitate sessions with IDOC supervisory personnel to cultivate the necessary skills to create even better working environments across the department.
- Create the appropriate materials for session facilitation.
- Send materials to IDOC to print.
- Foundation Sessions:
 - Pilot Session for leaders:
 - 2 days at the Central Office
 - 4/24 & 4/25
 - List of attendees:
 - Day 1 – Admin Leaders (Central Office, Parole Directors, Wardens, Deputy Wardens).
 - Day 2 – Add Majors, Captains, Assistant Directors (Parole), possibly some additional “influencers” within the leadership ranks.
 - TCG will work with IDOC to schedule full rollout for supervisors.
 - Dates to be determined
 - May-July
 - Pre-communications and invitations will be provided to IDOC.

IDOC:

- IDOC will handle scheduling for the Pilot Session followed by Foundation Sessions.
- IDOC will print materials.