



**Eastern Ohio Correctional Center
Wintersville, OH**

Belmont, Carroll, Columbiana,
Guernsey, Harrison, Jefferson,
Monroe, Noble

**Franklin County CBCF
Columbus, OH**

Franklin

**Lucas County Correctional
Treatment Facility
Toledo, OH**

Lucas

**MonDay Community Correctional
Institution**

Dayton, OH

Darke, Green, Miami,
Montgomery, Preble, Fayette

**NorthEast Ohio Community
Alternative Program**

Warren, OH

Ashtabula, Geauga, Lake, Portage,
Trumbull

**NorthWest Community
Corrections Center**

Bowling Green, OH

Defiance, Fulton, Henry, Williams,
Wood

**River City Correctional Center
Cincinnati, OH**

Hamilton

**STAR Community Justice Center
Franklin Furnace, OH**

Nelsonville, OH

Adams, Athens, Brown, Clinton,
Fairfield, Gallia, Highland, Hocking,
Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs,
Morgan, Pickaway, Perry, Pike,
Ross, Scioto, Vinton, Washington

**Stark Regional Correction Center
Louisville, OH**

Holmes, Stark, Tuscarawas, Wayne

**W.O.R.T.H. Center
Lima, OH**

Allen, Auglaize, Hancock, Hardin,
Mercer, Putnam, Paulding, Shelby,
Van Wert

**West Central Community
Correctional Facility**

Marysville, OH

Champaign, Clark, Delaware,
Logan, Madison, Marion, Morrow,
Union

House Finance Subcommittee on Public Safety

House Bill 33

Ohio Operating Budget

Fiscal Years 2024-2025

Testimony of: Cary Williams

Executive Director

NorthWest Community Corrections Center

Committed to Community Corrections Excellence

CorJus Inc. PO Box 2400, Wintersville, OH 43953

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Good morning Chair Miller, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Public Safety. My name is Cary Williams, I am the Executive Director of NorthWest Community Corrections Center in Wood County, and a Trustee of CorJus, Inc. CorJus is a professional association that represents eleven publicly operated Community Based Correctional Facilities (CBCFs) in Ohio. I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 33, the state FY24/25 operating budget.

The first CBCF in Ohio dates to 1978 and was established to be a locally controlled entity. Today, CBCFs serve all 88 counties in Ohio and provide residential treatment to over 7,500 offenders annually, as well as several thousand more in a variety of outpatient programs. CBCFs provide the highest level of treatment dosage in the communities they serve. Through ingenuity and community collaboration, CBCFs have expanded their holistic treatment to include programs for substance abuse, cognitive restructuring, anger management, vocations, family reunification, general education, medication assisted treatment (MAT), trauma, and mental health, among many others. CBCFs receive GRF funding through the 501501 line within the Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections budget.

CBCFs are effective at working with high risk, felony level offenders with a variety of criminogenic needs. These offenders are often at higher risk of recidivism than their lower-level peers within the system. Due to this risk, it is imperative that CBCFs always keep highly trained and specialized employees working with this population. Systemically, it produces a serious problem when highly trained staff leave CBCFs to take higher paid jobs in the community, where they usually work with lower-level offenders. The importance of qualified staff in CBCFs has never been more apparent.

The increase in substance abuse and mental health issues we are seeing will inevitably lead to more individuals being involved in the criminal justice system. Community corrections programs will continue to work hand-in-hand with judges and stakeholders to link those Ohioans to services which can help put them on a path to success. Access to treatment is vital.

We appreciate the increases to the 501501 line included in the as-introduced version of the governor's budget. Increases of 6.4% in 2024, totaling \$5,709,137, and an additional 5.4% in 2025, totaling \$5,112,200, will put CBCFs on a path towards addressing needs in staff retention and increases in overall costs. As I previously stated, staffing retention issues are of paramount importance. The revolving door must be slowed. We recommend the amounts already proposed should remain. Reductions in the proposed amounts could have negative impacts on quality of services, operational capacity, and levels of safety.

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CorJus also supports the proposed inclusion of reimbursable Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) services for CBCFs in the Behavioral Health Reimbursement Program located in line item MHA 336422. We appreciate Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services for their support in including CBCFs. This will allow offenders in CBCFs to access expanded services targeting addiction and withdrawal. This program was developed for county jails to request reimbursement for psychotropic medications. Additional benefits for offenders could also be reaped by allowing CBCFs access to the psychotropic reimbursement portion of the program. Currently, individuals incarcerated in CBCFs are responsible for their own medical needs. While CBCFs do their best to offset costs for offenders out of their own budgets, rising costs in mental health medications takes a toll. Offenders are often unable to access treatment or are saddled with financial burdens upon release. Allowing CBCFs access to reimbursement for psychotropic medications would be a great benefit to individuals seeking treatment. To ensure appropriate funding levels for the program, CorJus requests an annual increase of \$1,000,000 to line 336422 over the currently proposed \$4,000,000 annually. This increase would restore the line item to the previous annual total of \$5,000,000 for the Behavioral Health Reimbursement Program.

In summary, CorJus strongly believes CBCFs, as well as all of community corrections, will continue to play a vital role in Ohio's communities. Investments of 6.4% in FY24, and 5.4% in FY25, in the 501501 line would allow CBCFs to play a stronger role in aiding the communities they serve. Additionally, inclusion of CBCFs in the psychotropic medication reimbursement aspect of the Behavioral Health Reimbursement Program will be greatly beneficial. It will provide individuals access to treatment and reduce their financial barriers upon release. Increasing the allocation for the program by \$1,000,000 annually will provide greater access for county jails and CBCFs and will ensure a continuum of service for both entities as well.

Before closing my testimony, CorJus would like to thank ODRC for their continued support and collaboration. The steady leadership of Director Chambers-Smith and her staff have been invaluable. CorJus truly values the positive working relationship with ODRC and looks forward to our growing partnership.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I appreciate you allowing me the opportunity to testify before you on House Bill 33, the state operating budget, and would be happy to take questions at this time.

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