



TESTIMONY OF:

Michael Klinger, Jail Services Attorney

BROOKLYN DEFENDER SERVICES

Presented before

The New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice

Oversight Hearing: Voting on Rikers

April 14, 2026

My name is Michael Klinger. I am a Jail Services Attorney at Brooklyn Defender Services (BDS). We thank Chairs Brewer and Brooks-Powers and the Committees on Governmental Operations, State and Federal Legislation and Criminal Justice for the opportunity to testify on today's Oversight hearing on voting in the New York City jails.

For 30 years, BDS has worked, in and out of court, to protect and uphold the rights of individuals and to change laws and systems that perpetuate injustice and inequality. After 29 years of serving Brooklyn, we expanded our criminal defense services to Queens. We represent over 40,000 people each year who are accused of a crime, facing the removal of their children, or at risk of deportation. Our staff consists of attorneys, social workers, investigators, paralegals and administrative staff who are experts in their individual fields. BDS also provides a wide range of additional services for our clients, including civil legal advocacy, assistance with the educational needs of our clients or their children, housing and benefits advocacy, as well as immigration advice and representation.

In addition to zealous legal defense, BDS provides a wide range of services to address the causes and consequences of legal system involvement. We have built a practice around supporting people who are detained pretrial to mitigate the burdens and trauma created by confinement and to protect our clients from collateral consequences. Through our jail-based programming, we advocate for our clients to access services they are entitled to such as medical care and educational access. Additionally, our established presence in New York City jails allows us to monitor and document the conditions New Yorkers encounter when incarcerated and advocate for the basic human rights, health, and safety of our clients and other incarcerated people. Furthermore, many of the people that we serve live in heavily policed and highly surveilled communities.

I. Legal Framework for Election Administration in City Jails

In New York State, otherwise-eligible voters who are in jail pretrial or serving a sentence on a misdemeanor conviction are eligible to vote by absentee ballot.¹ People who are currently incarcerated for a felony conviction are ineligible to vote.²

Under New York State law, the New York City Board of Elections (“the Board” or “BOE”) is generally responsible for conducting voter outreach, registration, and elections.³ The City of New York is responsible for the Board’s budget; the Board is otherwise treated as a creature of state law not strictly under the jurisdiction of the Mayor or City Council.⁴

Under Local Law 29 of 2000, codified under New York City Charter Section 1057-a, the New York City Department of Correction (“the Department”) is a “participating agency,” responsible for a range of tasks associated with facilitating participation in elections.⁵

The Charter generally specifies that participating agencies are responsible for, among other things: (a) distributing voter registration forms; (b) providing assistance in completing these distributed voter registration forms; (c) transmitting any completed forms to the Board of Elections within two weeks of the receipt of the completed forms; (d) prominently displaying promotional materials designed and approved by the Board of Elections; and (e) submitting semi-annual reports on the implementation of the Charter requirements.⁶ Additional requirements, specific to the Department, cover the distribution and submission of absentee ballot applications and subsequently received absentee ballots.⁷

¹ See generally, S. 830B, 2021-2022 Leg., Reg. Sess. (N.Y. 2021). See also NYCLU: ACLU of New York, *Voting with a Criminal Record*, <https://www.nyclu.org/resources/know-your-rights/voting-criminal-record> (last visited Apr. 16, 2026).

² *Id.*

³ See generally, N.Y. Elec. Law § 3-212 (McKinney). See also New York City Board of Elections, *About the NYC Board of Elections*, <https://vote.nyc/page/about-nyc-board-elections> (last visited Apr. 16, 2026) (listing the Board’s responsibilities as including: (a) voter registration, outreach, and processing; (b) maintenance and updating of voter records; (c) processing and verification of candidate petitions/documents; (d) recruiting, training, and assigning the various Election Day officers to conduct elections; (e) operating poll site locations; (f) maintaining, repairing, setting up, and deploying Election Day equipment; (g) ensuring each voter their right to vote at the polls or by absentee ballot; (h) canvassing and certifying the vote; (i) conducting voter education, including notification and dissemination of election information; (j) preparing maps of various political subdivisions).

⁴ See N.Y. Elec. Law §§ 3-208, 3-300; 4-136(1).

⁵ N.Y.C., N.Y., Charter § 1057-a.

⁶ *Id.* at (2), (3)(c), (4), (7), and (8).

⁷ *Id.* at (9) (“In addition to the other requirements of this section, the department of correction shall implement and administer a program of distribution and submission of absentee ballot applications, and subsequently received absentee ballots, for eligible inmates. Such department shall offer, to all inmates who are registered to vote, absentee ballot applications, and a means to complete them, during the period from sixty days prior to any primary, special, or general election in the city of New York until two weeks prior to any such election. Such department shall subsequently provide any absentee ballot received from the board of elections in response to any such application to the applicable inmate, as well as a means to complete it. Such department shall provide assistance to any such

II. Voting from New York City Jails

The Department partners with the Vote in NYC Jails Coalition (“the Coalition”), of which BDS is a member, to conduct voter registration drives in the jail facilities on Rikers Island.⁸ As the Department has testified, those registration drives represent the primary method by which the Department seeks to satisfy its obligations under Charter Section 1057-a with respect to voter registrations and absentee ballot applications. The eventual distribution of Board-issued absentee ballots, and the collection and delivery of any subsequently completed ballots remains solely within the Department’s responsibility.

a. Registrations and Absentee Ballot Applications

As described by members of the Coalition, voter registration drives are led by at least one Department staff member and take place over the course of 3-4 hours on designated days. The Coalition is generally informed in advance as to the facility it will be visiting, but information about which buildings or housing units are on the schedule is not shared in advance, nor is any record from the Department provided after the fact as to which housing units the Coalition visited.⁹ As a general matter, Coalition members are advised that they are not permitted to take any written materials (besides those provided by the Department for purposes of registration, voter education, or absentee ballot application) either into or out of the facilities.¹⁰

At the conclusion of a registration visit, Coalition members are often able to tally the number of registration forms completed, and the number of absentee ballot forms completed, but not the names or other identifying information about the people who completed those forms. In practice, the number of people that the Coalition registers in a given day ranges from 10 – 80, although the average number is approximately 30-40 registrations, with approximately the same number of absentee ballot applications.

inmate in filling out such application or ballot upon request. Such department shall, not later than five days after receipt, transmit such completed applications and ballots from any inmate who wishes to have them transmitted to the board of elections for the city of New York. The provisions of this subdivision shall not apply in any specific instance in which the department deems it unsafe to comply therewith.”)

⁸ The Department testified that it permits the Coalition to conduct 16 registration trips each year. In practice, this number is not one to which the Department has formally committed, and the Coalition has routinely negotiated to attain that approximate number each of the past several years, following an initial offer by the Department of between ten and twelve visits.

⁹ In the Coalition’s experience, officers escorting Coalition members sometimes share their discretionary rationale for either including or excluding a particular housing unit. Explanations have included such bases as the perceived “mood” of a particular housing unit on a particular day; whether or not a unit has received or is expecting to receive a commissary delivery; whether or not a unit has recently received or is about to receive lunch; whether or not a unit is underpopulated because of some programming or recreation; whether or not there has been a use of force or other alleged behavioral infraction recently.

¹⁰ Functionally, this prohibition means that the Coalition is not permitted to maintain an independent list of the names of people it meets with, nor any information about the exact number of registrations and/or absentee ballot applications it assists people to complete. This prevents the Coalition from subsequently determining whether a particular person it sought to register is ever actually registered.

Assuming 16 visits per year and approximately 50 registrations and ballot requests at each visit, the Coalition may register 800 people each year. The exact number of people registered as a result of the Coalition’s efforts is not made available by either the Department or the Board of Elections.

b. Missing Data: Absentee Ballot Distribution and Collection

The Coalition relies, often without success, on the Department and the Board for their discretionary determination to share information about: (1) the numbers of ballots distributed to people in custody in the city jails; (2) the number of completed ballots that are eventually collected and then delivered to the Board of Elections; (3) the number of ballots actually received by the Board of Elections; (4) the number of received ballots that are rejected by the Board of Elections for non-curable defects; (5) the number of received ballots that are rejected by the Board of Elections for curable defects; (6) the number of rejected-but-curable ballots that are returned to the Department for cure by the intending voter; and (7) the number of successfully-cured ballots that are subsequently received by the Board and counted.

A recent Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request to the Department of Correction for data required to be produced pursuant to Charter Section 1057-a reports, as required, the number of people “served” by the Department’s election-related efforts, the number of registration forms “distributed,” and the number of registration forms collected and forwarded to the Board, among other things.¹¹

While the documents produced pursuant to this FOIL request indicate that in the most recent reported years, between 1,000 and 2,000 people have been served, and fewer than 1,000 registration forms have been collected and sent to the Board, there is no substantive explanation for why the number of people served is not closer to the total number of people who come through Department custody each year.¹² Specifically, assuming 24,000 people per year cycle through the Department’s custody, there is no explanation as to why an average of approximately 2,000 people are being served, and why only approximately 35% of those served are generating voter registration forms.¹³ The 1057-a reports are not required to include the number of actual votes counted from among those absentee ballots collected by the Department and delivered to the Board. Significantly, the Board’s testimony today indicates that there is a further and significant drop-off from the number of registrations to the number of successfully-cast ballots.

¹¹ Documents produced pursuant to FOIL Request FOIL-2025-072-02636 are attached hereto as an Appendix. We note that the Department asserts that registration forms and absentee ballot applications are distributed “via three different methods: Monthly registration events Making forms and ballot applications readily available in each facility’s law library and similarly upon discharge.” *See, e.g.*, Appendix, “Agency-Based Voter Registration: Reporting Period: January 1 through June 30, 2022.”

¹² The New York City Comptroller’s Office’s “DOC Dashboard” reports 1,887 admissions in January 2026, and an average of 2,010.5 for the months of July through December of 2025. Assuming approximately 2,000 admissions per month, the total number of people who cycle through Department custody annually is approximately 24,000. *See* New York City Comptroller, *Department of Correction (DOC) Dashboard*, <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/services/for-the-public/department-of-correction-doc/dashboard/> (last visited Apr. 16, 2026).

¹³ From the Board, it would be useful to know how that 35% rate of return compares to the registration rate in the population at large.

III. Proposed Legislation Addresses Some Transparency Concerns

a. Int. 786 and Proposed Amendments

Int. 786 would require the Department of Correction to report on the number of notices and cure affirmations received from the Board of Elections to be delivered to voters in city custody for the purposes of curing, as well as the number of cure affirmations returned to the Board of Elections.

This bill takes a critical step forward in helping to understand whether the Board and the Department are meaningfully meeting the requirements of state election law section 9-209, which requires an opportunity for voters to cure when a defect is deemed curable.¹⁴

While we acknowledge that any information solely under the control of the Board must be sought through the Department, we urge the Council to explicitly seek the following information, as discussed above in Section II(b):

1. the number of ballots actually received by the Board of Elections;
2. the number of rejected-but-curable ballots that are returned to the Department for cure by the intending voter; and
3. the number of successfully-cured ballots that are subsequently received by the Board and counted.

b. Int. 797 and Proposed Amendments

Int. 797 would require the Department to report the number of voter registration events it facilitates, the number of completed registration forms it receives from people in custody, and the number of absentee ballots it distributes to people in custody.

This bill would enhance the reporting already required under City Charter section 1057-a, by requiring greater detail about how registration is conducted. This is welcome; the current reporting is so shrouded that the Department can count placing forms in the law library the same as a volunteer-led outreach visit into the housing units. This bill would shed more light on the process.

Because the current 1057-a reporting includes only a single reported figure for “Number of persons served,” it is impossible to determine the nature of that service, and thus to determine what methods may be more successful and what methods less so. We propose that Int. 797 be amended to additionally seek:

1. The number of people served through in-person events held to promote voter registration and voting;
2. The number of registration forms distributed *and collected* at in-person events held to promote voter registration and voting.

IV. Additional Proposals

¹⁴See generally, N.Y. Elec. Law § 9-209(3).

The Department of Correction, in its 1057-a reporting, acknowledges that the voting process on Rikers Island generally “remains challenging in the absence of a direct polling site.”¹⁵ One of the challenges – that of reaching the approximately 24,000 people who cycle through the jail facilities each year – is amenable to a relatively straightforward solution: As suggested during public comment by Zachary Katznelson, executive director of the Independent Rikers Commission, by making voter registration and absentee ballot applications a meaningful part of the intake process, the Department could significantly increase both the number of registered voters with active absentee ballot requests in Department custody, and – perhaps more critically – the understanding and awareness of both the staff and people in custody as to the central importance of the right to vote, and the lawful ability to exercise that right even while in custody.

Finally, we urge the Council to engage with the Department and Board in as open and collaborative a way as is practicable to continue working through whatever practical or technological barriers may exist to: (1) creating in the jail facilities a New York State “vote center” where voters from multiple voting districts and precincts can vote in person by a non-absentee process; and (2) in the interim, creating workable and efficient in-person absentee voting locations, as the Board of Elections already does at its own discretion in certain non-carceral locations, as Executive Director Ryan testified.

V. Conclusion

For all of these reasons, Brooklyn Defenders asks that the Council amend and pass the proposed legislation on today’s agenda and that it remain committed to improving both the access to the vote for people in the city’s custody, and the broader understanding both inside and outside the jails of the central and critically important role that civic engagement plays in community safety.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me at mklinger@bds.org.

¹⁵ See, e.g., Appendix, “Agency-Based Voter Registration: Reporting Period: July 1 through December 31, 2023” at 2.

APPENDIX

Agency-Based Voter Registration

Reporting Period: January 1 through June 30, 2022

Agency:	Department of Correction
Name of Agency Reporter:	Mark Pauley
Phone:	718-546-0807
Email:	Mark.Pauley@doc.nyc.gov

Number of persons served	3,500
Number of registration forms distributed:	3,500
Number of registration forms collected and sent to Board of Elections:	157
Number of front-line staff trained:	0
Agency website traffic (number of clicks) directed to Campaign Finance Board website (NYC Votes):	21

Describe how your agency distributes applications.

The Department distributed voter registration forms and absentee ballot application forms via three different methods: Monthly registration events (more information on these can be found below in response to the next prompt), making forms and ballot applications readily available in each facility's law library and similarly upon discharge. The registration events provided a recurring means of engaging the population, while placing the registration forms in each facility's law library and in the discharge areas gave individuals the opportunity to register on their own. These forms were printed in English and Spanish equivalents with written instructions from NYC Votes for each on how to properly fill out the forms.

The Department has also been in partnership with the health provider in the city's jails, Correctional Health Services (CHS), to conduct in-person engagement and assistance.

Describe special registration activities, if any.

The Department conducts monthly voter registration events in collaboration with a coalition group made up of external stakeholders and volunteer groups. These events consist of in-person voter registration and absentee ballot registration drives across each housing area in different facilities each month. Upon request, special registration events are held in addition to these monthly efforts.

The Department has worked diligently to provide as much information as possible and on a regular basis to the population. In partnership with NYC Votes, the voting arm of the New York City Campaign Finance Board (NYCCFB), the Department distributed literature that outlined key election dates, races, and need-to-know voting information. The Department also consistently provided messaging with this same information as part of a weekly flyer that goes out to the population. The

Agency-Based Voter Registration

Reporting Period: January 1 through June 30, 2022

Department uploaded all voting-related materials to each individual in custody's tablet as well, so that this information was readily available.

Describe challenges, both resolved and unresolved.

As per the past several reporting periods, conducting voter engagement activities, especially those done in-person, remained a major challenge due to the ongoing global pandemic. And yet, in light of this continuing difficult situation, the Department is pleased to report that significant strides continued to be made. The Department has forged a partnership with NYC Votes in the time since the last semi-annual report. This new partnership has been instrumental in achieving several short-term goals referenced in the last report during these past six months, and also in mapping out long-term engagement goals that we hope to be able to speak to in future iterations of this report.

The Department collects and delivers registration forms and ballot applications directly to BOE if individuals in custody choose to take advantage of that option. If individuals choose not to have DOC staff collect and hand-deliver their forms to the appropriate BOE office, they have the opportunity to mail their forms with the free weekly stamps or pre-stamped envelopes provided by the Department. The Department also operates a social services request system which can be utilized to provide voter documents in various languages and to provide voter assistance when requested.

Please list all locations where registration forms are distributed and/or made available to the public:

Org/Site Location Name	Street Address	Borough
Department of Correction	Multiple facilities – Hazen St., Elmhurst, NY (Rikers Island)	Bronx
Department of Correction	1 Halleck St.	Bronx

(Add a new row for each additional location)

Agency-Based Voter Registration

Reporting Period: July 1 through December 31, 2022

Agency:	Department of Correction
Name of Agency Reporter:	Mark Pauley
Phone:	718-546-0807
Email:	Mark.Pauley@doc.nyc.gov

Number of persons served	4,000
Number of registration forms distributed:	4,000
Number of registration forms collected and sent to Board of Elections:	262
Number of front-line staff trained:	0
Agency website traffic (number of clicks) directed to Campaign Finance Board website (NYC Votes):	27

Describe how your agency distributes applications.

The Department ensures that voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications are readily available in each facility's law library and similarly upon discharge. Persons in custody have the opportunity to complete these applications and send them directly to their local Board of Elections (BOE) office or have DOC's Senior Program Liaison (SPL) hand deliver them to the applicable BOE office. Correctional Health Services (CHS), in partnership with the Department, and during routine medical visits, provides assistance in completing forms and coordinate with the SPL for their collection and distribution to BOE. All individuals in custody have recently been assigned a tablet again under the new tablet program, and the Department is in the process of uploading voter education information, candidate information, and registration forms and absentee ballots to them.

Describe special registration activities, if any.

As part of the Department's voter registration initiative, we have been partnering with The Legal Aid Society ("Legal Aid"). Legal Aid provides volunteers on a monthly basis that meet with persons in custody and assist with the voter registration process. These monthly civic engagement events provide the incarcerated population a recurring means of connecting and engaging with the community and participating in the electoral process. Legal Aid is also part of the voting rights coalition on Rikers Island which remains active and engaged on a monthly basis.

The Department has worked diligently to provide as much information as possible and on a regular basis to the population. In partnership with NYC Votes, another coalition partner, the Department distributed literature that outlined key election dates, races, and need-to-know voting information. The Department also provided this messaging as part of a weekly flyer that goes out to the incarcerated population.

Agency-Based Voter Registration

Reporting Period: July 1 through December 31, 2022

Describe challenges, both resolved and unresolved.

As per the past several reporting periods, conducting voter engagement activities, especially those done in-person, remained a challenge due to the ongoing global pandemic. And yet, in light of this continuing difficult situation, the Department is pleased to report continued progress. The Department has maintained relations with the multitude of stakeholders that make up the aforementioned voting rights coalition and has once again rolled out tablets to the incarcerated population which will help ease the flow of voting information.

The voting process on Rikers Island does remain complicated in the absence of a direct polling site. The Department collects and delivers registration forms and absentee ballot applications directly to BOE if individuals in custody choose to take advantage of that option. If individuals choose not to have DOC staff collect and hand-deliver their forms to the appropriate BOE office, they have the opportunity to mail their forms with free weekly stamps or pre-stamped envelopes provided by the Department. The Department also operates a social services request system which can be utilized to provide voter documents in various languages and also to provide voter assistance when requested.

Please list all locations where registration forms are distributed and/or made available to the public:

Org/Site Location Name	Street Address	Borough
Department of Correction	Multiple facilities – Hazen St., Elmhurst, NY (Rikers Island)	Bronx
Department of Correction	1 Halleck St.	Bronx

AGENCY-BASED VOTER REGISTRATION

REPORTING PERIOD: JANUARY 1 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2023

Agency: NYC Department of Correction

Name of Agency Reporter: Mark Pauley

Phone: (718) 546-0807

Email: Mark.Pauley@doc.nyc.gov

Number of persons served	2,500
Number of registration forms distributed:	2,500
Number of registration forms collected and sent to Board of Elections:	187
Number of printed educational materials about ranked choice voting distributed:	31
Number of front-line staff trained:	0
Agency website traffic (number of clicks) directed to Campaign Finance Board website (NYC Votes):	24

Describe how your agency distributes applications.

The Department ensures that voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications are readily available in each facility's law library and similarly upon discharge. Persons in custody can complete these applications and send them directly to their local Board of Elections (BOE) office or have DOC's Senior Program Liaison (SPL) deliver them to the applicable BOE office. When Correctional Health Services (CHS) providers meet with persons in custody for routine visits, they can provide assistance with the completion of these forms as well. CHS staff collaborates with DOC's SPL, who will collect and distribute forms to the BOE offices.

Describe any special registration activities, if any.

The Department has a multi-pronged approach to registering voters. In partnership with the New York City Campaign Finance Board (CFB), we have been working on the development of a voter education module to acquaint persons in custody with the basic concepts of democracy and the role of the election process. The voter education and training module is designed to educate individuals in custody and promote participation in the electoral process.

Additionally, we are leveraging the Department's tablet technology to increase awareness of upcoming elections, distribute information about issues and candidates, and enable persons in custody to request voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications. We are also recruiting volunteers who commit to independently lead voter registration drives at our facilities on a bi-monthly basis, after they have received training and necessary security clearances.

In partnership with The Legal Aid Society and other community-based organizations, we lead monthly voter registration initiatives, where a small group of volunteers from these organizations visit select housing units to discuss the importance of civic engagement, distribute voter registration forms and absentee ballots, and aid in getting these forms completed and collected.

AGENCY-BASED VOTER REGISTRATION

REPORTING PERIOD: JANUARY 1 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2023

Describe challenges, both resolved and unresolved.

The voting process on Rikers Island remains challenging in the absence of a direct polling site, however the Department works with stakeholders to identify solutions that mitigate the impact of this challenge. The Department collects and delivers registration forms and absentee ballot applications directly to BOE if individuals in custody choose to take advantage of that option. If individuals choose not to have DOC staff collect and hand-deliver their forms to the appropriate BOE office, they can mail their forms with free stamps or pre-stamped envelopes provided by the Department. The Department also provides voter documents in various languages and voter assistance, upon request.

Please list all locations where registration forms are distributed and/or made available to the public.

Org/Site Location Name	Street Address	Borough
Department of Correction	Multiple facilities – Hazen St., Elmhurst, NY (Rikers Island)	Bronx
Department of Correction	1 Halleck St.	Bronx

Agency-Based Voter Registration

Reporting Period: July 1 through December 31, 2023

Agency: NYC Department of Correction

Name of Agency Reporter: Mark Pauley

Phone: (718) 546-0807

Email: Mark.Pauley@doc.nyc.gov

Number of persons served	1,500
Number of registration forms distributed:	1,500
Number of registration forms collected and sent to Board of Elections:	144
Number of printed educational materials about ranked choice voting distributed:	400
Number of front-line staff trained:	0
Agency website traffic (number of clicks) directed to Campaign Finance Board website (NYC Votes):	29

Describe how your agency distributes applications.

The Department ensures that voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications are readily available in each facility's law library and similarly upon discharge. Persons in custody can complete these applications and send them directly to their local Board of Elections (BOE) office or have DOC's Senior Program Liaison (SPL) deliver them to the applicable BOE office. When Correctional Health Services (CHS) providers meet with persons in custody for routine visits, they can provide assistance with the completion of these forms as well. CHS staff collaborates with DOC's SPL, who will collect and distribute forms to the BOE offices. The Department has also made significant progress in leveraging its tablet capabilities in this area and individuals in custody are utilizing the devices to request voter registration applications and absentee ballots.

Describe special registration activities, if any.

The Department has a multi-pronged approach to registering voters. In partnership with the New York City Campaign Finance Board (CFB), the Department has developed a voter education "train the trainer" module that seeks to acquaint persons in custody with the basic concepts of democracy and the role of the election process through the use of trained frontline staff and volunteers. The hope is to promote greater participation in the electoral process. Trainings are set to begin in January 2024 and the Department expects to have more to share in the next iteration of this report.

Additionally, the Department is leveraging its tablet technology to increase awareness of upcoming elections, distribute information about issues and candidates, and enable persons in custody to request voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications. We also steadily recruit student interns and volunteers who commit to independently lead voter registration drives at our facilities on a bi-monthly basis, after they have received training and necessary security clearances.

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Reporting Period: July 1 through December 31, 2023

In partnership with The Legal Aid Society and other community-based organizations, we lead monthly voter registration drives, where a small group of volunteers from these organizations visit select housing units to discuss the importance of civic engagement, distribute voter registration forms and absentee ballots, and aid in getting these forms completed and collected.

Describe challenges, both resolved and unresolved.

The voting process on Rikers Island remains challenging in the absence of a direct polling site, however the Department works with stakeholders to identify solutions that mitigate the impact of this challenge. The Department collects and delivers registration forms and absentee ballot applications directly to BOE if individuals in custody choose to take advantage of that option. If individuals choose not to have DOC staff collect and hand-deliver their forms to the appropriate BOE office, they can mail their forms with free stamps or pre-stamped envelopes provided by the Department. The Department also provides voter documents in various languages as well as voter assistance, upon request.

Please list all locations where registration forms are distributed and/or made available to the public:

Org/Site Location Name	Street Address	Borough
Department of Correction	Multiple facilities – Hazen St., Elmhurst, NY (Rikers Island)	Bronx
Department of Correction	1 Halleck St.	Bronx

Agency-Based Voter Registration

Reporting Period: January 1 through June 30, 2024

Agency: NYC Department of Correction

Name of Agency Reporter: Mark Pauley

Phone: (718) 546-0807

Email: Mark.Pauley@doc.nyc.gov

Number of persons served	1,215
Number of registration forms distributed:	1,215
Number of registration forms collected and sent to Board of Elections:	628
Number of printed educational materials about ranked choice voting distributed:	0
Number of front-line staff trained:	0
Agency website traffic (number of clicks) directed to Campaign Finance Board website (NYC Votes):	29

Describe how your agency distributes applications.

The Department's Senior Program Liaison, who is part of the Division of Programs and Community Partnerships, facilitates monthly civic engagement events where volunteers meet people in custody and distribute voter registration forms as well as absentee ballot applications. The Department also ensures that voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications are readily available in each facility's law library and similarly upon discharge, but people in custody can also use their tablets to request these materials. People in custody can complete forms themselves and mail them directly to their local Board of Elections ("BOE") office or have DOC deliver them on their behalf to the applicable BOE office.

Describe special registration activities, if any.

During the first half of 2024, the Department has continued its partnership with the Legal Aid Society and a coalition of other external stakeholders to offer civic engagement education and voter registration assistance to all interested and qualified people in custody. Through this partnership, we lead monthly voter registration drives, where a small group of coalition volunteers visit select housing units to discuss the importance of civic engagement, distribute voter registration forms and absentee ballots, and aid in getting these forms completed and collected.

In partnership with NYC Votes, the voting arm of the New York City Campaign Finance Board ("CFB"), and one of the many aforementioned coalition partners, the Department recently developed a voter education module in which staff and coalition volunteers educate people in custody on the basic concepts of democracy and the role of the election process. The Department also leverages its tablet technology to distribute non-partisan literature about issues and candidates for each election cycle. This literature is provided by our external partners and physical copies are also distributed on registration drives and via the law library.

Agency-Based Voter Registration

Reporting Period: January 1 through June 30, 2024

Additionally, the Department is leveraging its tablet technology to increase awareness of upcoming elections, distribute information about issues and candidates, and enable people in custody to request voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications. The Department also steadily recruits student interns and volunteers, who commit to independently lead voter registration drives at our facilities after they have received training and necessary security clearances.

Describe challenges, both resolved and unresolved.

The voting process on Rikers Island remains challenging in the absence of a direct polling site, however, the Department works with stakeholders to identify solutions that mitigate the impact of this challenge. The Department collects and delivers registration forms and absentee ballot applications directly to BOE for the people in custody who choose to take advantage of this option. People in custody are also able to register to vote and cast a ballot on their own, just as they would in the community. Eligible individuals can opt to request and receive a voter registration form and/or absentee ballot form via the mail. The Department does not play a role in this process and is not privy to any data for those that choose to vote this way, but it does provide free stamps or pre-stamped envelopes to help facilitate this. Upon request, the Department also provides voter documents in various languages as well as voter assistance

Please list all locations where registration forms are distributed and/or made available to the public:

Org/Site Location Name	Street Address	Borough
Department of Correction	Multiple facilities – Hazen St., Elmhurst, NY (Rikers Island)	Bronx

Agency-Based Voter Registration

Reporting Period: July 1 through December 31, 2024

Agency: NYC Department of Correction

Name of Agency Reporter: Mark Pauley

Phone: (718) 546-0807

Email: Mark.Pauley@doc.nyc.gov

Number of persons served	2,000
Number of registration forms distributed:	2,000
Number of registration forms collected and sent to Board of Elections:	697
Number of printed educational materials about ranked choice voting distributed:	1,063
Number of front-line staff trained:	39
Agency website traffic (number of clicks) directed to Campaign Finance Board website (NYC Votes):	24

Describe how your agency distributes applications.

The Department's Senior Program Liaison, who is part of the Division of Programs and Community Partnerships, facilitates monthly civic engagement events where volunteers meet people in custody and distribute voter registration forms as well as absentee ballot applications. The Department also ensures that voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications are readily available in each facility's law library and similarly upon discharge, but people in custody can also use their tablets to request these materials. People in custody can complete forms themselves and mail them directly to their local Board of Elections ("BOE") office or have DOC deliver them on their behalf to the applicable BOE office.

Describe special registration activities, if any.

During the second half of 2024, the Department continued its partnership with the Legal Aid Society and a coalition of other external stakeholders to offer civic engagement education and voter registration assistance to all interested and qualified people in custody. Through this partnership, DOC leads monthly voter registration drives, where a small group of coalition volunteers visited select housing units to discuss the importance of civic engagement, distributed voter registration forms and absentee ballots, and assisted with getting these forms completed and collected.

In partnership with NYC Votes, the voting arm of the New York City Campaign Finance Board ("CFB"), and one of the many coalition partners, the Department recently developed a voter education module in which staff and coalition volunteers educate people in custody on the basic concepts of democracy and the role of the election process. The Department also leverages its tablet technology to distribute non-partisan literature about issues and candidates for each election cycle. This literature is provided by our external partners and physical copies are also distributed on registration drives and via the law library.

Agency-Based Voter Registration

Reporting Period: July 1 through December 31, 2024

Additionally, the Department is leveraging its tablet technology to increase awareness of upcoming elections, distribute information about issues and candidates, and enable people in custody to request voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications. The Department also recruits student interns and volunteers, who conduct independent voter registration drives at our facilities after they have received training and necessary security clearances.

Describe challenges, both resolved and unresolved.

The voting process on Rikers Island remains challenging in the absence of a direct polling site, however, the Department works with stakeholders to identify solutions that mitigate the impact of this challenge. The Department collects and delivers registration forms and absentee ballot applications directly to BOE for the people in custody who choose to take advantage of this option. People in custody are also able to register to vote and cast a ballot on their own, just as they would in the community. Eligible individuals can opt to request and receive a voter registration form and/or absentee ballot form via the mail. The Department does not play a role in this process and is not privy to any data for those that choose to vote this way, but it does provide free stamps or pre-stamped envelopes to help facilitate this. Upon request, the Department also provides voter documents in various languages as well as voter assistance.

Please list all locations where registration forms are distributed and/or made available to the public:

Org/Site Location Name	Street Address	Borough
Department of Correction	Multiple facilities – Hazen St., Elmhurst, NY (Rikers Island)	Bronx