

## Media Release

November 3, 2016  
For Immediate Release

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:  
Dawn-Renee Smith, Communications Director  
[Dawnrenee.smith@nebraska.gov](mailto:Dawnrenee.smith@nebraska.gov)

---

### **NDCS Receives Vera: *Safe Alternatives to Segregation* Report**

(LINCOLN) – Today, Director Scott R. Frakes announced his receipt of the *Safe Alternatives to Segregation* report from the Vera Institute of Justice (Vera). Following his appointment as director and prior to his arrival in Nebraska, Director Frakes advised NDCS administrative staff to apply for assistance from Vera to look at its restrictive housing practices.

Vera conducted a year-long assessment of how NDCS uses restrictive housing. Together, NDCS and Vera worked to identify opportunities for change and innovation in the area of restrictive housing. During this same time, legislation required NDCS to move forward with significant changes to how restrictive housing was being utilized and, in particular, the length of time it was used.

NDCS promulgated Title 72 of the Nebraska Administrative Code, which ensures restrictive housing is used only when all other options have been exhausted and places greater administrative review over the placement in and continuation of restrictive housing. In July, 2016, Director Frakes discontinued the use of disciplinary segregation, which was a sanction of a period of time in restrictive housing based on certain rule infractions.

This work could not have been completed without the funding from the U.S. Department of Justice and the Bureau of Justice Assistance. Director Frakes extends appreciation to Vera and department staff for the work put forth during this project.

“Restrictive housing should be used to manage risk and not as punishment. We will house people in the least restrictive environment that is safe for all, while providing access to mental health treatment and cognitive interventions designed to change behavior and reduce risk,” said Director Frakes. “The best reform of restrictive housing is reducing the need for restrictive housing by improving the quality of life within prisons and reducing idleness, which is a priority for this agency.”

Vera will join the Long-Term Restrictive Housing Workgroup meeting, scheduled for November 16, 2016, to discuss the recommendations and assist NDCS is developing additional strategies to reduce the use of restrictive housing.

###

Editor’s Note: [The Vera: Safe Alternatives to Segregation](#) report is available on the NDCS website.