

TO: Professors Nishi Kumar and Erica Navalance

FROM: Amelia Sylvest

RE: Facility Memorandum

DATE: November 7, 2024

.....

City of Faith Monroe House

Introduction

City of faith is a federally funded outreach program providing reentry services for post-incarcerated individuals.¹ Specifically, the reentry services aid in the rebuilding of distressed familial relationships, securing employment, providing educational opportunities and promoting positive change in effort to thwart re-offending conduct.²

Once enrolled, all residents are required to both start and proactively make contributions to a savings account.³ Additionally, each resident receives weekly one-on-one time with their case manager, who helps the resident take steps toward either returning to their home or finding a new one.⁴ Bus passes are provided to the residents for travel to the facility's host cities, including Baton Rouge, Monroe, and Little Rock.⁵ Further, because many residents historically struggle with addiction and substance abuse, City of Faith prioritizes sobriety.⁶ In addition to employment opportunities and assistance in securing employment, the facilities stock closets full of clothing in a wide array of sizes to "help [their] residents dress for success."⁷

In order to have visitors, the resident's loved ones must submit a Visitor Request Form via their website,⁸ no later than one (1) week prior to the visit. No more than 4 visitors may attend visitation hours, which occur on Saturdays between 2-4 pm, and Monday and Wednesday between 8-9pm.⁹ The form must be completed each time a loved one wishes to visit a resident.¹⁰

Number of Deaths Since 2014 and Trends

After requesting the Death in Custody Records from City of Faith Monroe, I was told that although no deaths had occurred between 2020-2024, they were unable to disclose any information under the Louisiana Public Records Act because they are a federal facility. After being informed I needed to go through the Department of Corrections to obtain any such

¹ <https://cityoffaith.org/history/>.

² *Id.*

³ <https://cityoffaith.org>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ <https://cityoffaith.org/visitor-request-form/>

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*

information, I conducted research and found that in the years 2015 and 2019, two deaths occurred as a result of health complications.¹¹ Specifically, one black female passed in the year 2015, and one black male passed in the year 2019, with both causes of death listed as “[m]edical.”¹²

Jail Characteristics

The City of Faith Monroe House (City of Faith) is a female-founded, non-profit “half-way house,” located at 1511 and 1814 Jackson St., Monroe, Louisiana 71202.¹³ The website may be found at: <https://cityoffaith.org>. The facility is situated in Ouachita Parish with the Garden District of Monroe.¹⁴ Since its founding in 2003, it has expanded to its arms to other 2 other communities, including Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Little Rock, Arkansas.¹⁵ Currently, City of Faith maintains seven facilities, four for federal inmates and two for state inmates.¹⁶

The facilities are designed to have a capacity of 45 individuals.¹⁷ However, as of 2024¹⁸, the current population is 31.¹⁹ Inmates serving the last two (2) years of their prison sentence or six (6) months from parole eligibility are eligible for admission. However, admission standards limit those who have been convicted of violent or drug-distribution related crimes are restricted to not more than six (6) months and prohibit those with sex-related convictions from entering the program.²⁰ Placement of individuals is determined by statutory and regulatory criteria, bolstered by recommendations provided from officers and case managers.²¹

Over the past four decades, the program has served as an outreach to support individuals after incarceration in effort to thwart re-offending conduct.²² Specifically, City of faith is contracted by the Federal Bureau of Prisons to provide residential re-entry centers and home confinement services.²³ The Bureau of Prisons Central Office furnishes 3 major indefinite delivery contracts (IDCs) to City of Faith, one of which belongs to City of Faith Monroe.²⁴ The Monroe facility holds a sixteen-million-dollar IDC, valid through January of 2025, to provide Residential Reentry Centers (RRCs) and home confinement services, which includes specific accommodations for male and female offenders bed and board.²⁵

¹¹ <https://www.incarcerationtransparency.org/la-prison-deaths/ouachita/>. See *Ouachita Incarceration Transparency PDF*.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ <https://cityoffaith.org/history/>.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ <https://cityoffaith.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/COF-Final-report-24.pdf>

¹⁸ Updated as of August 8, 2024, submitted on October 10, 2024.

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ <https://cityoffaith.org/mission-vision-core-values/>.

²² <https://cityoffaith.org/history/>.

²³ <https://govtribe.com/vendors/city-of-faith-prison-ministries-319g8>

²⁴ <https://govtribe.com/vendors/city-of-faith-prison-ministries-319g8>.

²⁵ *Id.*

Although there is no available information regarding their terms, The current leadership consists of the president, Terry Williams, the treasurer, John Craft, the secretary, Robbie McBroom, and the remaining members of the Board of Directors.²⁶ Additionally, there is no information on their website regarding annual budgeting. Through further research, I discovered that as a whole, City of Faith Monroe has a total revenue \$5,861,822, total expenses of \$5,693,252, and net assets of \$3,210,244.

Evidence of Oversight

Since 1993, the American Correctional Association has accredited the City of Faith.²⁷ All facilities, including City of Faith Monroe, yearly audited by The Prison Rape Elimination Act.²⁸ City of Faith consistently receives excellent marks on all PREA reviews and audits. City of Faith Monroe has a zero tolerance policy toward all forms of sexual abuse or misconduct, and the staff participates in comprehensive training program to thwart sexual abuse.²⁹ Furthermore, any allegations of misconduct are immediately reports to the DOC or BOP, and offers the resident immediate protection from the assailant.³⁰ In the event an act of sexual misconduct occurs, the victims receives a medical examination and counseling within 24 hours.³¹ Medical care is not provided at all-on site, however, it is within the Monroe Community either at the Monroe Medical Clinic or Ochsner LSU Hospital. As of 2024, there were zero incidents in relation to sexual abuse or misconduct.³²

In my research, I found nothing in relation to hearings within the past 5 years, hearings on operations by Parish or City Counsel, nor injunctions nor consent decrees in effect within the past 5 years.

Evidence of Transparency

Upon requesting records, it was extremely difficult to get in contact with an administrator or employee, as they are only “open” from 1-5 on Sundays. Furthermore, I attempted to reach each extension line to no avail, and I sent two Public Records Requests to their P.O. Box. I then submitted a contact request via the website, and finally heard back from a member of their staff. I was informed that because this is a federal facility, Public Records must be obtained through the Department of Corrections. However, the staff member informed me that there were no deaths between the years of 2020-2024, which I confirmed via research. There is no available information regarding public briefings on jail operations, the inmate list nor reports or research

²⁶ <https://cityoffaith.org/board-of-directors/>.

²⁷ <https://cityoffaith.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/COF-Final-report-24.pdf>

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ <https://cityoffaith.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Monroe-PREA-Policy.pdf>

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ *Id.*

³² *Id.*

by advocacy groups. However, past stories and testimonials,³³ and news stories³⁴ are accessible through their website.

With the exception of its inability to release death in custody records, the agency's website is extremely transparent. It provides PREA audits from the years 2014-2024, with the exception of the year 2017.³⁵ The PREA audit offers comprehensive information on the inmates age range, sex, disabilities, sexual identities (LGBTQ+), as well as a roster of the staff.³⁶ The PREA also provides for the numbers of sexual abuse or misconduct allegations, and the number of criminal and administrative investigations.³⁷ Further, for those members that are either disabled or LGBTQ+, the audit provides confirmation that steps taken to ensure the residents attained all the information they needed regarding the PREA in a manner they could understand.³⁸ As mentioned above, the audit provides the total population, the max capacity, the average daily capacity, the number of both part-time and full staff members, and the number of contractors that have contact with the residents.³⁹

Although there is no information relating to who is specifically the chief of security, the audit offers daily procedures involving the chief of security and the required number of officers on duty at all times.⁴⁰ All criminal investigations are completed by the Monroe Police Department.⁴¹ Ultimately, there is no evidence that the City of Faith Monroe is less than forthcoming in regard to the procedures and incidents arising within the facility.

Notable Cases or Complaints

There are no notable cases or complaints on the conditions of City of Faith in the City of Monroe. However, in 2009, a City of Faith Monroe guard, Kraig Dill forced a prisoner to have sex with him under duress, with threats of sending him back to prison.⁴² Allegedly, the executive team attempted to thwart the victim from reporting the assault to police.⁴³ A civil suit, *Boyd v. Dill* arose as a result, with City of Faith Prison Ministries being named as a defendant.

Additionally, in *Jones v. City of Faith Prison Ministries*⁴⁴, Jones was hired on as an employee in 2004, and took note of various practices which, in her view, were unethical and illegal such as denying residents medical treatment, residents were vacating the facility unsupervised, and inadequate employee training.⁴⁵ A few months later, City of Faith terminated

³³ <https://cityoffaith.org/testimonials/>

³⁴ <https://cityoffaith.org/news/>

³⁵ <https://cityoffaith.org/prea-compliance/>

³⁶ <https://cityoffaith.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/COF-Final-report-24.pdf>

³⁷ *Id.*

³⁸ *Id.*

³⁹ *Id.*

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ *Id.*

⁴² <https://www.courthousenews.com/city-of-faith-prison-ministriesaccused-of-sex-assault-coverup/>

⁴³ *Id.*

⁴⁴ *Jones v. City of Faith Prison Ministries*, No. 05-1675, 2006 WL 8456510 at *1 (W.D. La. 2006).

⁴⁵ *Id.*

Jones employment for expressing concern over the facility's poor practices.⁴⁶ She sought damages under the whistleblower statute and alleged they violated her constitutional rights under § 1983.⁴⁷ The court recommended that a motion to dismiss her claims be granted, and her § 1983 claims be dismissed without prejudice. Further, the court declined to exercised supplemental jurisdiction over her state law claim under the whistleblower statute.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ *Id.* at *2-3.

⁴⁷

⁴⁸ *Id.* at. *3.