

# The Future of Incarceration for Women in Vermont



## Background

For more than a decade, advocates have shared their ongoing concerns about the condition of the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility (CRCF), which currently serves as Vermont's only women's prison. Women who are currently or were formerly incarcerated at CRCF continue to report ongoing health and safety concerns.

## Current status

As they prepare for the 2023 legislative session, lawmakers and state officials have started planning for a replacement facility; the Department of Buildings and General Services contracted with HOK, a design, architecture, engineering, and urban planning firm, to conduct a feasibility study that was presented to lawmakers in the spring of 2021. This study, often referred to as the HOK report, evaluated the current conditions and presented several options to replace or repair some or all of Vermont's existing correctional facilities.

## What's next

During the upcoming 2023 legislative session, another HOK report detailing their plan to replace the women's prison and build a reentry facility is expected. The Department of Buildings and General Services is in the process of looking for suitable land for the project. In the spring, lawmakers will need to allocate additional funds to keep the process moving forward and will ultimately need to approve the purchase of any new land.

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The Vermont Commission on Women and our partners, Lund, Mercy Connections, the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, Vermont Works for Women, and the Women's Justice and Freedom Initiative, are engaging in a process to hear from Vermonters, service providers, community organizations, formerly and currently incarcerated individuals and their families, Department of Corrections staff, and others about their thoughts and concerns regarding replacing the women's prison. These conversations will explore facility concerns as well as investments in community resources and alternatives to incarceration, staffing, and culture issues at the Department of Corrections. The information we gather will be shared with lawmakers to inform decisions about the future of incarceration for women in Vermont.