

Vermont Department of Corrections Supports Mission of Modernization with Guardian Tracking



||||||| Customer Profile |||||



Guardian Tracking 2022



400+ correctional officers



~1,000+ incarcerated and supervised population

The Challenge

Operating six correctional facilities across the state, the Vermont Department of Corrections (DOC) is responsible for more than 1,000+ incarcerated or supervised individuals at any given time, with total facility population counts exceeding 1,650 at the beginning of the decade. To operate their six facilities, the Vermont DOC employs over 1,000 staff, 400+ of which are correctional officers.

In 2023, the department redesigned its vision, mission, and values statements with the goal of more accurately reflecting the current practices of the department and the services they provide to Vermont communities. A year later, the department released a 2024-2030 Strategic Plan centered around several key priorities, including their staff and an intent to foster a culture of continuous modernization.

Reflective of the department's desire to modernize and support their staff, the agency partnered with Vector Solutions in 2022 to implement Guardian Tracking, a conduct management and positive recognition software solution.



The Choice

According to a Financial Manager with the Vermont DOC, the department heard about Guardian Tracking from a fellow state agency, the Vermont State Police (VSP), another Vector Solutions customer.

“They were utilizing it and [a Director with VSP] came over and was our Interim Commissioner for a while,” she said. “He brought it to us and said we needed [Guardian Tracking.]”

During his tenure, the Interim Commissioner identified the fact that the agency lacked a database for tracking misconduct as a serious concern.

“We had no database for tracking staff misconduct, and he made it a priority to address it,” the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) and Constituent Services Unit Director with the department said.



“[Guardian Tracking has] also allowed us to formalize and mechanize a way for all staff to have the ability to recognize anybody else [for their positive conduct]...If we are tracking the good work of our people and recognizing them, people feel happier and they stay longer.”

— PREA and Constituent Services Unit Director
Vermont Department of Corrections

The Change

By implementing Guardian Tracking, the Vermont Department of Corrections has:

- Furthered their mission to modernize their operations and implement new technologies and processes that reflect present-day correctional practices.
- Supported the department’s strategic goals related to staff and staffing, particularly through positive recognition and improved management of employee-related data.
- Improved processes related to capturing and documenting conduct data, ensuring both positive and negative behaviors are addressed.
- Equipped their staff with an easy-to-use digital tool and reduced reliance on in-person or paper-based information sharing.
- Formalized processes for recognizing employees engaging in noteworthy positive behaviors, improving morale and ensuring inclusion in performance reviews.
- Utilized entries submitted through Guardian Tracking for their annual recognition ceremony.

“Before Guardian Tracking, we did not have a computer-based database system to track the good and bad work of our people,” the PREA and Constituent Services Unit Director said. “We need to have a mechanism [to retain information] that is not dependent on human memory. And Guardian Tracking allows for that.”

In addition to supporting efforts to modernize operations, Guardian Tracking has also helped the department meet their strategic priorities related to their staff.

“If we are tracking the good work of our people and recognizing them, people feel happier and they stay longer,” she said.

According to the PREA and Constituent Services Unit Director, positive recognition was especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It was a time where people were sad and scared and so we really pushed positive recognition,” she said. “It also allowed us to formalize and mechanize a way for all staff to have the ability to recognize anybody else [for their positive conduct].”

On the other hand, the agency has also improved processes related to below average conduct.

“We would tackle the bad performers because we had to,” the PREA and Constituent Services Unit Director said. “But the subpar people would get ignored and they would float by. Now, we have a system where a person can actually go and put an entry into [Guardian Tracking] and now it’s memorialized.”

Unlike their counterparts in other states, Vermont DOC does not maintain their own employee records. Instead, these records are managed by the Department of Human Resources. As a result, it was difficult to ensure all relevant information was considered when evaluating employee performance.

“Depending on another entity who follows their own rules and has their own requirements means they’re not following your [rules and requirements],” she said. “With Guardian Tracking, we can track what we want.”

As the department continues to expand their usage of Guardian Tracking, they hope to become increasingly sophisticated in the information they track and the interconnectivity of their data.

“We want to advance Guardian Tracking even further,” the PREA and Constituent Services Unit Director said. “We want [more data] in the system so it’s keeping everybody honest, which is also going to improve how staff feel.”

