

Work Ethic Camp Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25)

November 1, 2025



INTRODUCTION

The Work Ethic Camp (WEC) is a 200-bed minimum custody facility operated by the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS). The facility is located in Red Willow County in southwest Nebraska. WEC began accepting probation offenders on April 10, 2001. On July 9, 2007, WEC began accepting incarcerated individuals into the program due to the passage of LB83. On August 30, 2009, LB274 passed, giving the Director of NDCS discretion to place incarcerated individuals at WEC. In fiscal year 2025 (FY25) the facility exclusively held male adult felony offenders and) were assigned at the discretion of the NDCS director. WEC was established to reduce prison overcrowding and to make prison bed space available for violent offenders, by addressing criminogenic needs and, ultimately, reducing recidivism.

To accomplish this goal, WEC provides structured, disciplined programming, including all of the following: work programs; vocational training; behavior management and modification; money management; substance abuse awareness, counseling, and treatment; and education, programming needs, and aftercare planning.

PURPOSE

Neb. Rev. Stat. § 83-4,147 requires that the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) provides an annual progress report on the Work Ethic Camp (WEC) to the Nebraska Legislature. This report will include an evaluation of the impact of the multi-treatment programs, including program costs, educational achievement, inmate disciplinary activity, probation release decisionmaking, and community reintegration.

MULTI-TREATMENT PROGRAMS

Most WEC programs are provided by NDCS team members. During FY25 the WEC program was allocated an operating budget of \$9,523,430. Some programs are provided by grant-funded programs at no direct cost to the agency. Overall, the impact of these programs is positive; completion numbers are noted following each program name.

Work Programs

Individuals are assigned to jobs at the facility or may apply to specific jobs and are paid for their work. Work assignments are available in the following areas:

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| • Sanitation | • Garden | • Maintenance |
| • Food service | • Hair care | • Recreation |
| • Education | • Library | • Road crews |
| | | • Warehouse |

Vocational Training

Code Academy (11) through Midland University is a vocational/life skills program providing instruction for individuals to learn to create computer coding. Students learn to design full stack applications using the React framework and Node.js. They gain a solid understanding of development topics and prepare to enter the workforce as junior developers. Students also work on improving soft skills and the ability to communicate with other developers. This program involves challenging coursework; applicants are screened for their ability to keep up with the curriculum by means of a brief "Coding 101" session. **Associated Builders & Contractors** offers OSHA, which provides 10 hours each of *General Industry* (23) and *Construction* (14) instruction on the rights and responsibilities in maintaining a safe workplace while working productively. Additionally, ABC Core Construction and ABC Construction Math are 24-hour courses providing classroom and practical application in construction. **Mid Plains Community College** (MPCC) offers five courses to support pursuit of gainful employment after reentry. These courses include **First Aid/CPR** (75), **OSHA Four Hazard** (51), **Forklift Certification** (64), **Scissor Lift/Skid Loader** (62), and **Essential Skills for the Workplace** (48). While not directly related to vocational skill building, soft skills for getting and keeping a job is essential to utilizing those vocational skills. Additional programs related to soft skills include **Getting Started – Soft Skills** (42) explores self-awareness, job searching, education and networking. **Job Retention** (31) assists with completion of a job retention inventory and discusses time management. **Interviewing and References** (38) helps participants learn to discuss job references, criminal background, and participate in mock interviews. **Job Market Essentials** (46) assists participants to create a resume and cover letter to utilize upon job searching.

Behavior Management and Modification

7 Habits on the Inside (74) is a program modeled after the principles presented in the book, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People," by Dr. Stephen R. Covey, and is delivered in collaboration with the staff of the Franklin Covey Company. Franklin Covey's 10-12 week training course has been proven to be life-changing. **Achieving Change Through Value-Based Behavior (ACTV-NE)** (89) is an evidence-based program designed to help individuals with a history of domestic violence to transform their lives and relationships. ACTV-NE is delivered in a group setting, twice per week, for 15 weeks. The content of the 30 sessions is organized into five categories: The Big Picture (large concepts and basic tools to build core life skills), Barriers to Change, Emotional Regulation Skills, Cognitive Skills, and Behavioral Skills. This program is an opportunity for change that gives the individual the choice to focus on habilitation and prepare for successful entry to a healthy life outside of incarceration.

5-KEY MODEL PROGRAMS: Role Induction/Focus Mapping (397) is completed by all residents soon after arriving at the facility. This informational session provides details regarding the 5-Key Model for Reentry and Well-Being Development. Individuals can learn about the 5-Keys programming and create their own focus map, which is then used as a

tool to assist in creating Success Plans. **Unlocking Your Thinking** (44) introduces participants to various mind traps and challenges to address destructive thinking patterns that can lead to negative behaviors. **Ideas for Better Communication** (36) encourages participants to build connections with others, develop effective listening and problem-solving skills, and break down destructive relationship roadblocks. **Understanding and Reducing Angry Feelings** (37) teaches participants to identify anger triggers, differentiate between healthy and unhealthy anger, set goals, plan strategies for interrupting angry patterns, and utilize progressive muscle relaxation techniques. **Building Social Networks** (18) allows individuals to complete a peer inventory, discuss surrounding themselves with friends who are positive influences, and identify strategies for handling situations related to old friends or family members who are negative influences. **Power from Within** (107) allows participants to discuss anxiety, feeling down, overwhelming stress, mental wellbeing and staying away from things that get them into trouble. **Rewarding Relationships** (59) teaches participants to build positive relationships, help set personal boundaries, improve communication, and connect with loved ones.

MONEY MANAGEMENT

Managing Money (73) teaches participants about financial well-being, budgeting, financial planning, and credit and debt.

SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT

Intensive outpatient (174) and **outpatient** (73) clinical services are provided for individuals assessed to require such intervention. Individualized treatment plans are developed for each person and the intensity of treatment is based upon the level of need. Both programs offer group, individual and educational sessions, focusing on the impact of substance use.

EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Every person who enters the educational program undergoes testing to determine educational needs. Individuals who have not previously completed a diploma or GED, and are under 22 years of age, are required to attend adult basic education classes to work toward improving academic skills and earning a diploma or GED. **Adult basic education** (6) class assists those who are not high school graduates or who have deficits in educational abilities. Adult Secondary Education (5) classes provide either a high school diploma or GED. Some form of instruction was provided to 71 students.

PROGRAMMING NEEDS

Inside Out Dads (34) connects incarcerated fathers to their families. The goal is to improve behavior while still incarcerated and to break the cycle of recidivism by developing pro-fathering attitudes, knowledge, and skills, along with strategies to prepare

for release. **Within My Reach** (16) is a skills-based program with critical, concrete tools that help participants control their own relationships in ways that will lead to more enriching, more satisfying interactions with the people who matter in their lives. **Beyond Anger** (42) is a four-week curriculum which helps clients in institutional settings and community corrections address anger, reconciliation, and emotion management plus guidelines for daily living.

AFTERCARE PLANNING

See Community Reintegration

INMATE DISCIPLINARY ACTIVITY

The table below illustrates the severity and frequency of disciplinary code violations for all individuals assigned to the WEC during FY25.

Class	Charge	Description	Total Charges
Class 1	1C	ASSAULT	1
	1H	DRUG OR INTOXICANT ABUSE	1
	Class 1 Total		2
Class 2	2D	DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY VALUED BETWEEN \$100 & \$500	2
	2E	DISOBEYING AN ORDER	5
	2G	THEFT	5
	2I	GAMBLING OR PROMOTING GAMBLING	2
	2J	UNAUTHORIZED AREAS	8
	2O	MEDICATION ABUSE	10
	2Q	TATTOO ACTIVITIES	3
	2S	FALSE REPORTING	1
	2U2023	FIGHTING	2
	Class 2 Total		38

Class 3	3A	FLARE OF TEMPER/MINOR PHYSICAL CONTACT	6
	3B	DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY UNDER \$100	1
	3C	POSSESSING OR RECEIVING UNAUTHORIZED ARTICLES	16
	3D	SWEARING, CURSING, OR USE OF ABUSIVE LANGUAGE OR GESTURES	4
	3F	SELLING, LOANING, OR GIVING ITEMS TO OTHERS	4
	3G	VIOLATION OF SANCTIONS	3
	3H	VIOLATION OF ANY SIGNED PROGRAM AGREEMENT	3
	3J	SANITATION	6
	3K	DISRUPTION	21
	3N	VIOLATION OF REGULATIONS	79
Class 3 Total			143
Grand Total			183

PROBATION RELEASE DECISIONMAKING

There were no individuals serving probation assigned to WEC during this reporting period.

COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION

The 5-Key Model program **Reentry Reality** (12) focuses directly on reentry challenges including physical and emotional well-being, navigating technology, and having a plan to be involved in supportive acts to ensure a smooth and successful reentry. Individuals successfully discharged from WEC are either released on parole, released to post release supervision, transferred to another NDCS facility such as community corrections in Omaha or Lincoln, or discharged directly from WEC when they reach their tentative release date. WEC and Reentry staff work with them to plan for residence, employment, and other needs as they transition to life in the community. All of the programming and interventions identified in this report aid in successful reintegration.