State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
WHITTLESEY ROAD
PO BOX 863
TRENTON NJ 08625-0863

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

SHEILA Y. OLIVER
Lt. Governor

MARCUS O. HICKS, ESQ.
Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:
Public Information Office
(609) 292-4036 ext. 5542

NJDOC Resumes Visitation and Inmate Activities with COVID-19 Precautions

TRENTON, NJ—October 6, 2020 — With COVID-19 positive cases holding steady at less than one percent among the staff and inmate populations, the New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) has announced plans to resume visitation at its prisons beginning, Friday, October 9, 2020.

Visitations will take place in an outdoor area, weather permitting, to allow for social distancing. Visitors will be required to call the prisons in advance to schedule their outdoor visit, with reservations scheduled on a limited, first-come-first-serve basis. With the exception of visitors under two years of age and those with a valid doctor's note, all visitors will be required to wear a face mask while on prison grounds in addition to adhering to all visit procedures, available on the Department's website under the facilities tab.

To maximize the number of incarcerated people who can receive visits and to accommodate social distancing, the total number of visitors permitted for each incarcerated person will be limited to two adults and two children. Each visitor will be temperature scanned at the facility, answer questionnaire regarding possible exposure to COVID-19, and sign an agreement acknowledging the revised visitation guidelines.

“The vast decline of COVID-19 positive cases across our facilities is encouraging and proof that our virus mitigation strategies, including our social distancing efforts, are working,” said NJDOC Commissioner Marcus O. Hicks, Esq. “Although we know we cannot go back to normal operations at this time, between our universal testing data and guidance from public health experts, we are able to make informed decisions on the resumption of activities and services that provide much-needed support and some semblance of normalcy for the incarcerated population within a COVID-19 world.”

The Department recently resumed select inmate activities, including inter-institutional transfers of inmates from the Central Reception and Assignment Facility (CRAF) to their assigned facility, intake of individuals from the county jails, and inter-Residential Community Release Program house transfers. Transporting of the aforementioned groups includes donning of proper PPE, sanitization of vehicles and social distancing. Individuals entering and transferring within NJDOC facilities will be tested for COVID-19 and held on a 14-day quarantine prior to being placed in the general population within the receiving facilities.

Additionally, the Gateway Substance Abuse Program has resumed individualized treatment programs. In-person one-on-one and small group mental health services are also operational along with select inmate services under the Division of Programs and Community Services, including Successful Transition and Reentry Series (STARS), Chaplaincy Services and State Facilities Education Activities (SFEA) Student-Inmates and adult basic education courses.

All resumed programs will incorporate public health guidance on virus mitigation, including the use of PPE, social distancing and sanitization. Where applicable, group activities will be smaller, and services will be consolidated and more frequent. For example, Chaplaincy Services will include attendee limits, dependent on service location, with certain customs such as handshaking or singing that could result in the spread of COVID-19 suspended. In-person educational instruction will also resume, with independent work provided on alternate weeks.

NJDOC continues to test incarcerated people and staff for COVID-19 at regular intervals. The newly established processes are provisional and may be further modified or rolled back if testing

data indicates a need to do so to protect public health.

###