

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE
Pursuant to P.A. 64 of 2019
Section 317
Training Academy Study

Section 317. (1) From the funds appropriated in part 1, the department shall conduct a study, in cooperation with the department of technology, management, and budget, to find a suitable location for a training academy. At a minimum, 4 locations must be selected for the study, and 2 locations must be the former Riverside Correctional Facility and the former Ojibway Correctional Facility. The new training academy must have classrooms, administrative offices, a gymnasium, a cafeteria, lodging facilities, an outdoor training area, and a firearm range.

(2) The results of the study, including projected costs for each location, must be reported to the senate and house of representatives appropriations subcommittees on corrections the senate and house fiscal agencies, the legislative corrections ombudsman, and the state budget office by April 1.

The MDOC has been exploring opportunities for a suitable training facility for some time. To be a viable option the facility would need to have lodging, a gymnasium, a computer lab and classrooms that could be used for New Employee training and also specialty training. The location was also important so that travel would be minimized. In our process, we looked at closed facilities to see if they could be remodeled and meet our needs, but all had significant potential deficiencies as a training site. The department became aware of the Green Oaks facility and began working with DHHS to negotiate the terms of the agreement as this facility as it was ideally located and could be converted to meet all of the needs of the MDOC. The department was in the process of finalizing the agreement when this boilerplate requirement was added to the budget.

The Green Oaks facility is a combination of newer and older buildings. These buildings are all connected so that no one would have to travel outside during training to move between dorms, kitchen, and teaching areas. The facility has a gym and large gathering area for large group meetings and presentations. The newer portions of the building are modern enough to provide clean living and training areas. They can be retrofitted with technology to serve trainees when they are in class and in between training sessions and as their residence.

Green Oaks had the following advantages:

- Centrally located near a highway
- Buildings are all under one roof. Facilitating year-round training.
- Portions of the facility are newer and would provide more than adequate living areas for trainees after retrofitting.
- Provides larger spaces for recreating, training, and group presentations.
- Is located close to a currently operational Correctional facility (Woodland) which could provide additional training advantages for each class of trainees.
- Is connected electronically with Fiber cable to an active facility to allow real-life interaction with a live facility without having to send trainees into a live facility.

The MDOC entered into an agreement with DHHS and took ownership of the Green Oaks facility on January 1, 2020.