



Rick Staly, Sheriff
FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

"An honor to serve, a duty to protect."

NEWS RELEASE

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Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility Selected for National Innovation Award

BUNNELL, Fla. — The Flagler County Sheriff's Office's Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility has been selected by the National Institute for Jail Operations to receive the 2025 Detention Facility Innovation Award. The award will be formally presented during the JAILCON25 Southern Regional Conference on October 15 in Mobile, Alabama.

The Detention Facility Innovation Award is awarded to a detention facility which has demonstrated exceptional achievement in developing and/or enhancing a particular aspect or feature in the facility or in the operations of the facility in line with the mission of the Sheriff's Office during the past year.

The award is the latest for the Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility, which, since Sheriff Rick Staly took office in 2017 and recruited Court and Detention Services Chief Dan Engert to lead the jail in 2020, has become a state and national model for corrections facilities. This marks the second time the jail has won the NIJO Detention Facility Innovation Award, having previously won the award in 2022.

"Since I became Sheriff, it has been my goal to make our jail one of the premier facilities not just in our state, but the entire country. As this award shows, we are proving that our jail is a leader in corrections and rehabilitation," said Sheriff Staly. "Although we are tough on crime, we don't want to have a revolving door arresting the same offenders over and over. Today, we give our inmates the tools and opportunity to turn their lives around and become productive citizens. By doing this our community is safer, which is reflected in our more than 50% reduction in crime since 2017."

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The NIJO previously awarded the jail the 2022 Detention Facility Innovation Award for its implementation of two programs designed to improve inmate outcomes and reduce recidivism after inmates are released from jail — the Successful Mental Health and Addiction Recovery Treatment Program and the Homeward Bound Initiative. In the three years since, both programs have been expanded in innovative ways and shown success with few graduating inmates returning to jail.

To further its mission of improving inmate outcomes, FCSO pursued innovative partnerships to give inmates in the SMART Program, which is provided in collaboration with EPIC Behavioral Healthcare, unique opportunities designed to supplement the program's evidence-based therapy curriculums.

In December 2024, the jail partnered with Parkview Church to reunite inmates with their children during the holiday season through a program called "Joy Beyond Walls: A Christmas Connection with FCSO and Parkview Church." The jail again partnered with Parkview Church in April for "The Hope Project," an ongoing initiative designed to provide inmates with the opportunity to participate in worship and church services.

In July, the jail introduced a new homeless kitten-fostering initiative in partnership with the Flagler Humane Society. Through this program, inmates conduct daily kitten care routines, including feeding, socializing, and bottle-feeding, designed to give inmates a sense of purpose, responsibility, a daily routine, and emotional support — all key components in effective addiction treatment and recovery.

Between 2022 and 2024, the SMART Program was evaluated by a research team from the University of North Florida to assess its effectiveness. During this period, they found that 69% of SMART Program graduates remained successful in recovery after their release from jail, and that program graduates were about 18% less likely to be re-arrested within six months of their release, compared to non-program participants.

The jail has also expanded its Homeward Bound Initiative, a partnership with Flagler Technical College, to provide inmates with training and credentials to enter good paying, high demand, readily available, and sustainable careers in the community after their release.

When the jail was first recognized by NIJO in 2022, the Homeward Bound Initiative offered two courses to inmates: vinyl graphics application and an HVAC pre-apprenticeship program. Now, the initiative features six courses, with food service management/culinary, electrician pre-apprenticeship, automotive body repair, and sewing and alterations programs added to its offerings.

Beyond skills and job-training courses, the Homeward Bound Initiative was also expanded in 2023 to include a General Education Development program, which provides inmates the opportunity to earn their GED diploma, equivalent to a high school degree, while at the jail.

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“We’re very proud of our programs and all that we have accomplished to help our inmates succeed and reduce the chance they will commit another crime and return to jail,” said Chief Engert. “We’ve expanded our programs greatly over the past few years, and we value our partnerships with local businesses, community organizations, and Flagler Technical College. These partnerships allow us to give our inmates opportunities to become productive citizens.”

“Our detention services team has done an excellent job building and expanding these programs so that we can help inmates succeed,” Sheriff Staly added. “I commend our detention team for embracing the vision and model of helping inmates turn their life around and not just a warehouse model of detention.”

In addition to the NIJO’s Detention Facility Innovation Awards, the Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility was previously awarded the 2023 Innovation Award - Medium Sized Jails from the American Jail Association and in February 2025, Chief Engert was selected to present on the jail’s award-winning programs during the National Sheriffs’ Association’s Winter Conference. Chief Engert is also a Commissioner on the Florida Corrections Accreditation Commission, setting standards for corrections throughout Florida.

The Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility is a two-diamond accredited corrections facility, holding accreditations by the Florida Corrections Accreditation Commission and the National Commission on Correctional Health Care.

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