

Rikers Island: Receivership Possibilities

What are the tools and resources a Receiver will have that are missing from a City-led plan?

WHAT THE CITY HAS NOT DONE:

WILL THE RECEIVER HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE REFORMS?

Administrative	Appoint personnel; power to do “whatever is lawful and required” for the administration of the jail”.	NO POWER. The city has rules preventing appointments of certain titles. For example, Wardens and Chiefs must be promoted from DOC’s own rank and file.	✓
	All powers currently held by the Mayor, the Department of Correction, and Correctional Health Services.	NO POWER.	✓
	Request More Power: petition the Court for any further necessary powers needed to reach compliance.	LIMITED POWER.	✓
	Request Court Intervention.	WILL NOT: City has not and will not ask for intervention because they wish to keep full control.	✓
	Request the Court to waive the state or contractual requirement that is causing any impediment to reforms.	The city is currently trapped in legal deficiencies and politics that are impeding true reform. Only a receiver – answerable to the court alone – can operate above the political fray.	✓
Security	Formulate and implement security plans.	OUT OF COMPLIANCE. The City has failed in its security practices. For example, a full-sized machete was recently discovered in the jails, amongst other weapons and contraband.	✓
	Ensure staffing levels are adequate.	OUT OF COMPLIANCE. Over 30% of staff currently do not showing up to work on a daily basis, many AWOL, as the Commissioner admits to being unaware of his staffing numbers.	✓
Staffing	Hire and use personnel both internally and from other State agencies.	NO POWER.	✓
	Contract with and retain necessary consultants.	OUT OF COMPLIANCE. It would take years under city procurement rules.	✓
	Create, modify, abolish or transfer positions; to hire, terminate, promote, transfer, evaluate and set compensation.	OUT OF COMPLIANCE. City rules make it almost impossible to do any of these things efficiently.	✓
	Contract for services needed.	OUT OF COMPLIANCE. City rules delay contracts and limit the number of possible bidders for the job.	✓
Health & Safety	Devise, publish & implement health and safety standards.	OUT OF COMPLIANCE. The city has failed in this category, with 20 detainees dying in the last year. In fact, the Chief of Correctional Health Services admitted that they are unable to keep up with medical appointments; In March 2022 alone, 12,745 medical appointments were missed.	✓
Facilities	Secure or acquire vehicles, technology, supplies, services, and any other equipment.	OUT OF COMPLIANCE. The city has had this control for many years and has failed to meaningfully and/or swiftly make the necessary improvements. For example, DOC’s gang intel unit does not have any computerized data system to track intel.	✓
	Procurement: acquire, dispose of, modernize, repair, and lease property, equipment, and technology.	OUT OF COMPLIANCE. The city has failed to modernize even its cell doors, which still do not lock properly, leading to violence on Rikers Island. Currently, it takes months for the City to order new cell doors due to bureaucratic red tape.	✓