

# Correctional Association of New York

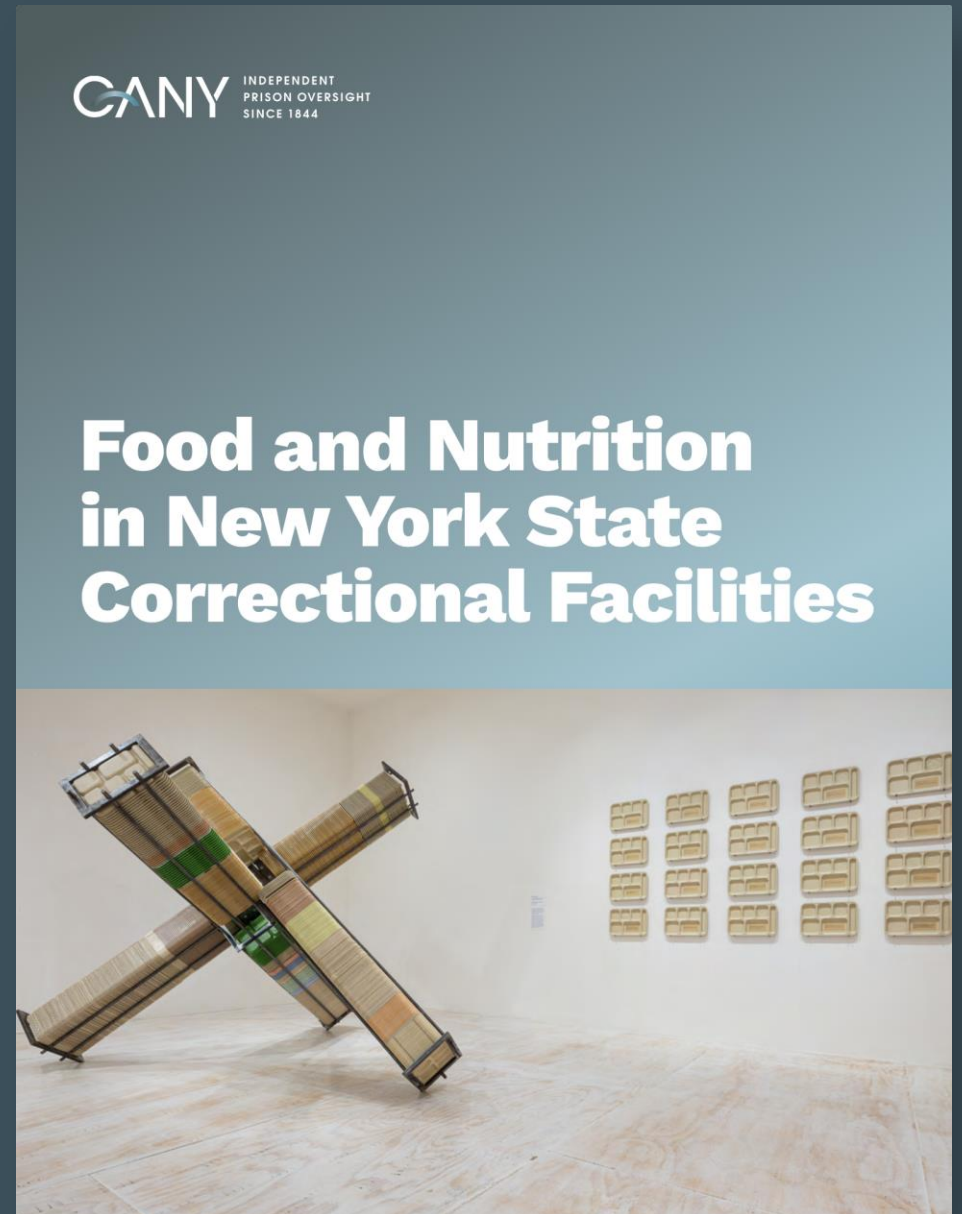
Reimagining Food in Prisons – December 4, 2025

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# CANY's report on Food and Nutrition in New York State Correctional Facilities

**Released November 2024**

- Report draws on experiences of incarcerated people accessing food in the mess hall, commissary and packages.
- Incorporates administrative data, and observations from monitoring visit to the state's food production center at Mohawk Correctional Facility.



**Link:** [CANY\\_Food+and+Nutrition+in+NY\\_Nov2024.pdf](#)

## Key Findings

- 1. Food access and quality:** concerns regarding food safety and nutritional value, e.g., lack of fresh produce. Food access issues e.g., access to culturally appropriate meals.
- 2. Mess hall avoidance and concerns with supplemental food sources:** Commissary items are often unavailable or unaffordable, packages are often delayed or denied, and access to equipment for safe food preparation and storage is inconsistent.
- 3. Promising DOCCS food and nutrition programs:** the Culinary Arts and horticulture programs, and the recent Supplementation Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) pilot.

Source: [CANY\\_Food+and+Nutrition+in+NY\\_Nov2024.pdf](#)

**“terrible, not real cooked food, it's quick chill. I don't eat it because of the water and the infection I got”**

▶ Cocksackie, 2022

**“I came into prison weighing 190lbs then I got up to 287lbs and I became diabetic. So I don't eat the food.”**

▶ Fishkill, 2023

**“Only favorites get to eat their religious diets. Most people with religious dietary restrictions are simply given kosher foods.”**

# Key Recommendations

- 1. Expanding access to fresh produce** including through the implementation of Bill A 6854 (Gibbs) / S 6810 (Cleare) to establish a program to purchase fresh produce from farms.
- 2. Increasing transparency** regarding menu items and nutritional content and incorporating Federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) into food standards for food service and commissary.
- 3. Expand training and certification** for people working in food service programs and those participating in Horticulture, Harvest Now and Culinary Arts Programs.

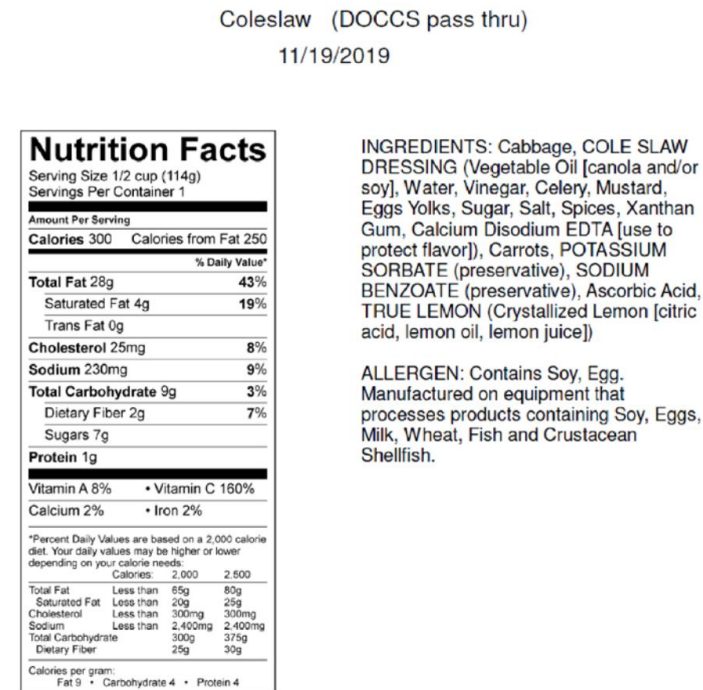
Source: CANY\_Food+and+Nutrition+in+NY\_Nov2024.pdf

nutrition staff employed by DOCCS. On the day of CANY's visit to the food production center, representatives were informed that there was one vacancy for a dietician role in this team.

► **Table 2. Professional Nutrition Staff Employed by DOCCS**

Civil Service Title	Job Description
<b>Nutritional Services Administrator 2 (NSA2)</b>	Under the general direction of the Director of Nutritional Services, NSA2 is responsible for managing the clinical dietary component of Nutritional Services through training and educating staff, maintaining the nutrient analysis program for all ingredients, recipes and menu menus revisions for healthier options, review and approve new ver products. The NSA2 also provides administrative support to the di assisting in policy and directive revisions.

► **Figure B: OMH nutritional information for coleslaw produced by DOCCS**



Source: Office of Mental Health, Cook Chill Recipe and Ingredient Analysis "Coleslaw (DOCCS pass thru)" <https://apps.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/cookchill/recipes/salad/Coleslaw7qt.pdf>

information regarding portion size, calories, or details on protein, fats, fiber, or sodium.

# An Analysis of Food Sources and Availability in New York's Correctional Facilities

**Released November 2025**

- Findings from interviews with incarcerated individuals, analysis of administrative records, and recommendations for improvement.
- Incorporates administrative data, and observations from monitoring visits across the state.

# An Analysis of Food Sources and Availability in New York's Correctional Facilities

Mess Hall, Commissary, and Packages

November 2025

**GANY** INDEPENDENT  
PRISON OVERSIGHT  
SINCE 1844

# Key Findings

## 1. Key Findings:

### • Nutritional Imbalances on the DOCCS Mess Hall Menu:

- Insufficient fruits, vegetables, protein, and whole grains, and excessive amounts of refined grains and sodium.

### • Commissary: Low Stock and High Prices

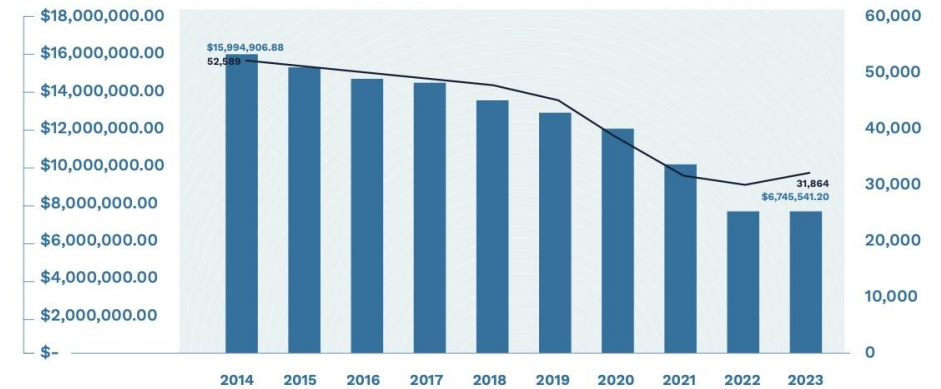
- Only 66% report the commissary fully stocked.

### • Problems with Package System:

- Delays in receiving packages, leading to spoiled food.
- Inconsistent application of package processing rules.

Figure 9

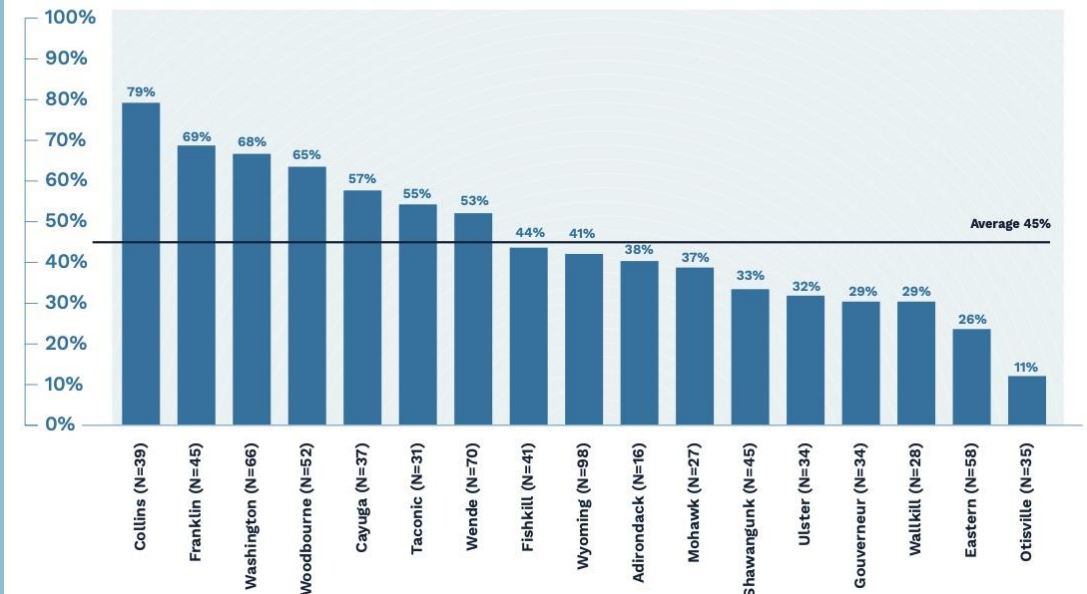
### Prison Population and Total Incarcerated Wages (2014-2023)



Source: CANY analysis of DOCCS total expenditures for incarcerated wages from 2014 to 2023. Total population numbers are from the DOCCS undercustody reports from 2014 to 2023.

Figure 10

### Percentage of respondents answering “No” to the question “Are you able to access items from packages in a timely manner”





# *Impact Justice Food in Prison Project*

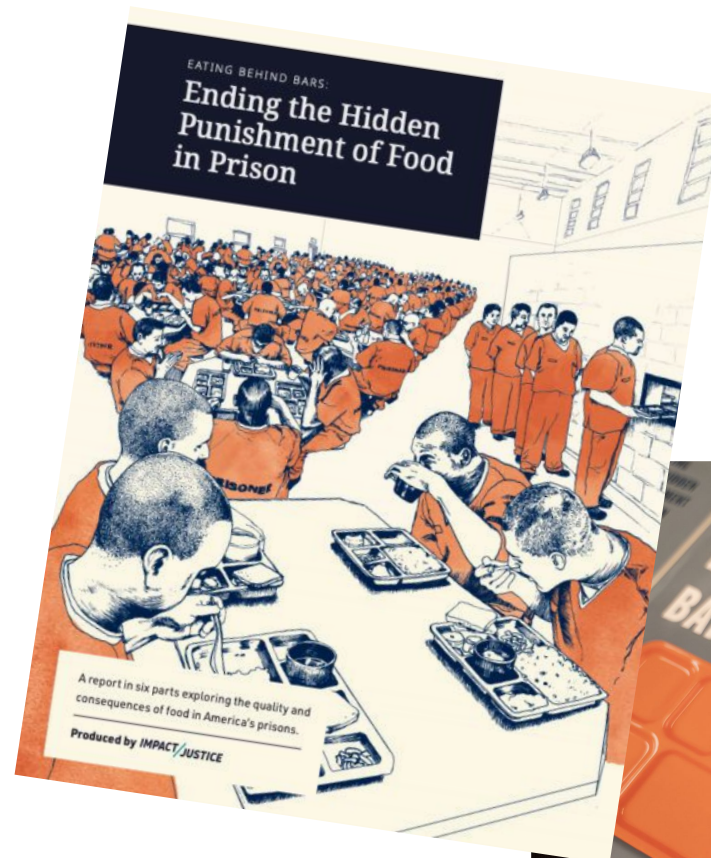
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*A brief national overview*

**IMPACT/JUSTICE**

# Food in Prison Project research

- 1 in three adults in the US has an immediate family member who has spent time in prison or jail
- Sites of food apartheid that replicate inequities on the outside
- "The food there was designed to slowly break your body and mind."



# Food on the tray

Photo credit: *The Frontier*



Photo credit: *The Post and Courier*

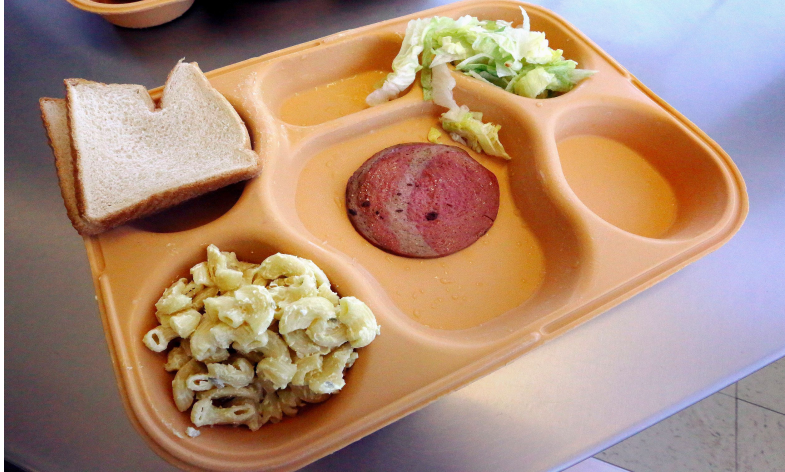


Photo credit: *The Marshall Project*



Photo credit: *Getty Images*

# Reported impacts

Headaches  
Brain fog  
Stroke  
Impaired neurodevelopment  
Depression & anxiety  
"Hanger"

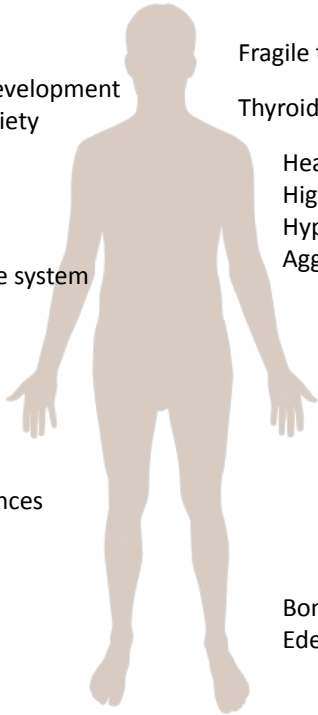
Fragile teeth

Thyroid issues

Heart disease  
High cholesterol  
Hypertension  
Aggressive & hostile behavior

Anemia  
Slow healing  
Suppressed immune system

Diabetes  
GERD  
Kidney trouble  
Gallstones  
Hormonal imbalances  
Cancer

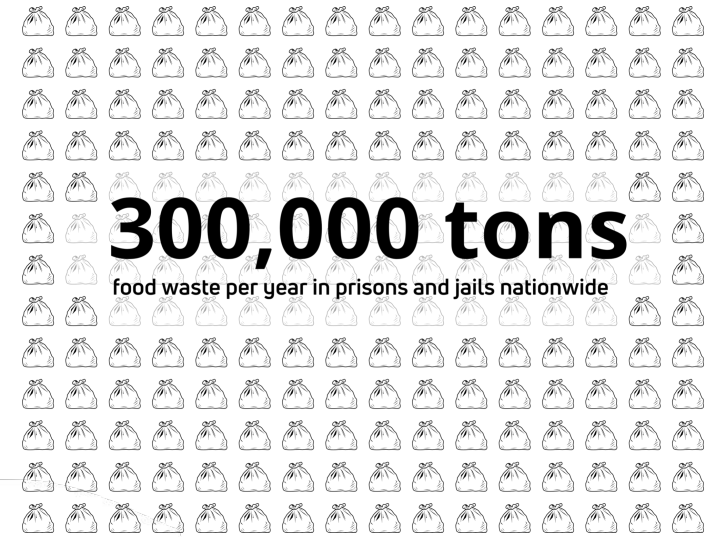


Hunger  
Increased body fat  
Food poisoning  
Gastritis  
Ulcers  
Rapid weight gain/loss  
Irritable bowel syndrome  
Overeating/eating too fast

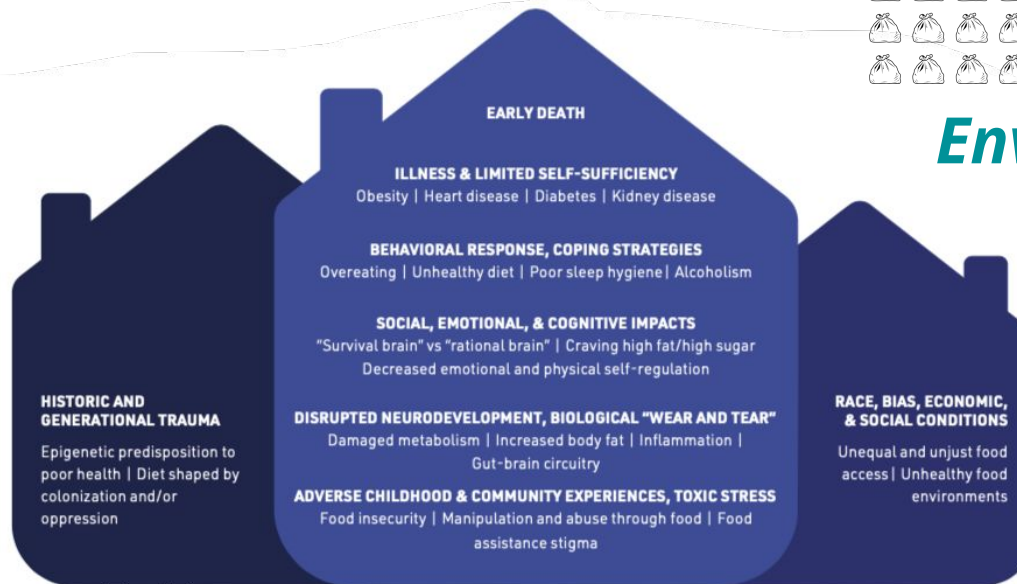
Bone loss  
Edema

## Individual health

## Community/public health



## Environmental health



# Root causes



Illustration credit: Melissa Garden

- Prioritization of resources
- Cultural attitudes
- Lack of understanding

# Farm to Corrections California

- Operating in all 30 CDCR prisons
- Facilitated purchase of over 325,000 pounds of fresh produce, directing over \$336,745 to 13 small and medium sustainable family farms\*
- Avocados, asparagus, lemons, persimmons, mandarins, kiwi, strawberries, watermelon, nectarines, pears, delicata squash, & more
- Changing minds and practices: reducing food waste, recipe test runs, new connections

\*January-September 2025



Photo credits: CDCR

*Please reach out!*

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Illustration credit: Melissa Garden



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Program Manager

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NEW ENGLAND

**We Serve a Network**  
of communities, organizations, and  
institutions working together to  
create a just, equitable, and  
regenerative food system in New  
England and beyond.

[www.farmtoinstitution.org](http://www.farmtoinstitution.org)



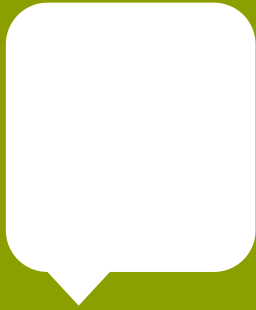
# METRICS

[dashboard.farmtoinstitution.org](https://dashboard.farmtoinstitution.org)

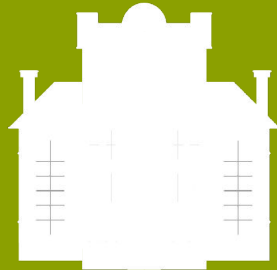
State	Total number of State Prisons	Total number County Jails	Total Population 2020/21 (all facilities)
MA	13	17	11,185
ME	6	13	3149
VT	6	0 with food service	1292
NH	3	10	2217*
RI	7	1	2086
CT	15	0	9457
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>27,169</b>

# Bringing People Together

Incarcerated  
Listening Sessions



Facility  
Site Visits



DOC  
Community of Practice





*fine* FARM to INSTITUTION  
NEW ENGLAND



# The State of Prison Food in New England: A Survey of Federal & State Policy

April 2023 Report

# Opportunities & Challenges



# VT Farm to Prison Project



# Get Involved!

**DOC & Jails:** Reach out, host a site visit, pilot seasonal and culturally relevant dishes.

**Farmers, Food Hubs, Distributors & Processors:** Explore product matches and distribution routes that work for facilities.

**Advocates, Families, & Formerly Incarcerated:** Join our advisory team, share lived experience, and co-design programs.

**Funders & Partners:** Invest in technical assistance, data systems, and scaling what works- state by state, facility by facility, community by community.





# Farm to Facility: Increasing Local Food in New England Prisons

January 14, 2026  
12pm - 1pm ET

With Presenters:

Britt Florio, Farm to Institution New England  
Leslie Soble, Impact Justice

*Farm to  
Institution*  
NEW ENGLAND

Webinar  
Series



# Let's Connect & Collaborate!

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# Why we do this work

We believe there are far too many people incarcerated, the incarcerated population is grossly overrepresented by Black and Brown men, a large proportion of incarcerated people are locked up for actions that are not a major threat to society, sentences are too long and the risk of re-sentencing too high, incarceration doesn't "correct" many if any, most people are damaged by time in the system, AND the system is not going away anytime soon.

While they are there, they have the right to healthy food for their bodies and minds, and dignity - SO it is valuable to work to make those changes, while we keep focussed on broader systemic changes also.