

Greetings from the whole team here at the Office of the Corrections Ombuds! The first half of 2025 was full of activity and change for the OCO.

After halting all overnight travel in February due to the statewide budget deficit, OCO staff were glad to resume monitoring trips to eastern Washington facilities in May. In May and June, staff made multiple visits to AHCC, CRCC, and WSP for monitoring and events.

In March, the OCO said farewell to Director Caitlin Robertson. Caitlin had served as OCO's director since June 2022 and before that as an Assistant Corrections Ombuds since March 2020. The recruitment process for a new director is underway. During this interim period, Elisabeth Kingsbury, Deputy Director, is serving as OCO's acting director. Elisabeth and the entire OCO team remain committed to ensuring the health, safety, welfare, and rights of people incarcerated in Washington state prisons and reentry centers.

Please read on for updates about recent OCO reports, DOC policies under review, legislative session outcomes, the OCO Construction Training Pathways Committee, and more.

January Monitoring Visits

1.2.25 WCCW: Two groups of OCO staff visited WCCW. One group met with individuals living in the MSC while the other group met with individuals in the COA and had discussions with DOC staff regarding use of force protocols.

1.9.25 WCC: OCO staff met with individuals living in the MSC and met with facility leadership.

1.10.25 WCCW: OCO staff met with individuals living in the IMU and COA. OCO staff also met with facility leadership.

1.14.25 MCCCW: OCO staff met with CTAP graduates and their instructor.

1.15.25 SCCC: OCO staff met with incarcerated individuals interested in restarting the regular LGBTQ+ meetings that were held prior to the pandemic. More than 40 incarcerated individuals attended two meetings scheduled for that day.

1.16.25 WCCW: OCO staff met with individuals living in the MSC regarding the construction board committee.

1.18.25 WCCW: OCO staff met with individuals living in the COA and DOC staff.

1.23.25 WCCW: OCO staff met with individuals living in the MSC as well as TRAC graduates and their instructor.

1.24.25 SCCC: OCO staff met with CTAP graduates and their instructor.

1.28.25 OCC: OCO staff met with incarcerated individuals in both living units and visited with people currently housed in segregation.

1.29.25 WSP: OCO staff met with DOC staff, incarcerated individuals in IMU, and facility leadership.

1.30.25 WCCW: OCO staff met with individuals living in the IMU and met with facility staff to discuss the emergency transfer of an incarcerated individual from WCCW to MCC earlier that morning.

1.30.25 WSP: OCO staff met with CTAP graduates and their instructor, individuals in the close custody units, medium units, camp, and IMU North and South. OCO staff also toured the Sustainable Practices Lab (SPL) and met with incarcerated workers as well as Correctional Industries staff working in the kitchen.

1.31.25 SCCC: OCO staff met with members of the Black Prisoner's Caucus (BPC) and participated in the BCP meeting.

February Monitoring Visits

2.6.25 MCCCW: OCO staff visited Gold Unit and verified temperature issues as well as mitigation steps being taken by MCCCW staff to resolve the issue. OCO staff also visited Bear Unit.

2.6.25 WCCW: OCO staff met with incarcerated individuals living in the minimum-security unit.

2.11.25 SCCC: OCO staff met with incarcerated individuals who participate in CTAP.

2.13.25 OCC: OCO staff toured the facility and spoke with individuals in the living units. OCO staff also met with DOC leadership prior to leaving the camp.

2.14.25 WCCW: OCO staff met with individuals living the minimum-security unit.

2.18.25 MCC: OCO staff met with incarcerated individuals in the IMU and Sky River Treatment Unit (SRTU).

2.25.25 WCCW: OCO staff met with individuals living in the IMU and DOC staff.

2.26.25 SCCC: OCO staff attended the Black Prisoner's Caucus (BPC) meeting.

2.27.25 WCCW: OCO staff met with individuals who are housed in the minimum-security unit.

2.28.25 WCC: OCO staff attended the bi-monthly BPC meeting and spoke with individuals before and after the event.

March Monitoring Visits

3.1.25 MCC: OCO staff presented to Concerned Lifer's Organization and then met with incarcerated individuals in the Twin Rivers Unit.

3.4.25 MCC: OCO staff attended a scheduled meeting of the Crossroads Program

3.6.25 WCCW: OCO staff met with individuals living in the minimum-security unit.

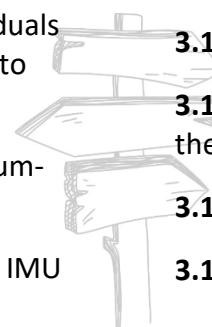
3.13.25 MCC: OCO staff attended an event in the Twin Rivers unit by MCC Alliances group, sat on panel and answered questions.

3.13.25 WCCW: OCO staff met with individuals living in the IMU.

3.14.25 WCC: OCO staff attended a Black Prisoners Caucus and visited the IMU.

3.18.25 WCC: OCO staff met with individuals living in the IMU

3.19.25 WCCW: OCO staff met with individuals living in the COA



3.20.25 SCCC: OCO staff attended a Black Prisoner's Caucus, confirming new sponsorship via the BPC community group and the startup of BPC Teach.

3.21.25 WCCW: OCO staff spoke with incarcerated individuals living in the minimum-security unit.

3.21.25 MCC: OCO staff attended an event in the Twin Rivers Unit.

3.27.25 WCCW: OCO staff met with incarcerated individuals in the close observation unit and spoke with staff.

3.28.25 OCC: OCO staff visited with incarcerated individuals and spoke with staff members.

April Monitoring Visits

4.4.25 MCC: OCO staff visited the individuals living at WSR, followed by visiting the camp (MSU)

4.9.25 SCCC: OCO staff conducted interviews with individuals in the IMU and discussed protocol.

4.15.25 WCCW: OCO staff met with an incarcerated person and DOC HQ staff to discuss their current situation.

4.16.25 SCCC: OCO staff attended a WA Way residential advisory council meeting and provided self-advocacy information in H5 A and B units.

4.17.25 WCCW: OCO staff met with an incarcerated person housed in a dry cell and spoke with DOC staff regarding this situation. OCO staff also supported this person during a conversation between the individual and DOC HQ staff.

4.18.25 OCC: All OCO staff toured the facility with staff and held a Quarterly Meeting for incarcerated individuals. After presenting updates, OCO staff led small group discussions, answering questions and providing assistance.

4.22.25 SCCC: OCO staff visited the IMU and spoke with many individuals currently housed in administrative segregation. OCO staff also visited health services and observed the room where incarcerated individuals are being held as part of the Intoxication Protocol process.

4.24.25 WCCW: OCO staff visited with incarcerated individuals housed in the IMU. OCO staff also stopped in the infirmary and spoke with incarcerated individuals and staff in the close observation area.

4.24.25 WCCW: OCO staff met with incarcerated individuals living in the MSC and the PEAR-CAT workgroup.

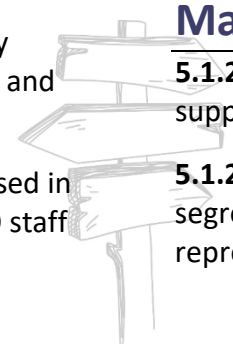
4.29.25 WCCW: OCO staff visited with incarcerated individuals living in the COA and IMU units.

4.30.25 MCC: OCO staff visited the individuals living at WSR and TRU units.

May Monitoring Visits

5.1.25 SCCC: OCO staff held a listening session to follow up on support efforts to resume LGBTQ+ group meeting at the facility

5.1.25 CBCC: OCO staff visited with incarcerated individuals in the segregation, safe harbor unit and spoke with CBCC tier representatives.



5.7.25 AHCC: OCO staff met with leadership, DOC staff and incarcerated individuals; visited carpentry program, toured the food factory and conversed with CI employees

5.7.25 AHCC: OCO staff met with DOC staff and incarcerated individuals living in B-unit.

5.8.25 WSP: OCO staff met with leadership and DOC staff as well as incarcerated individuals and employees working in SPL.

5.15.25 MCC: OCO staff toured the kitchen and then participated in the Concerned Lifers Organization educational summit. Staff met with incarcerated individuals and community partners including UW, DRW, Columbia Legal Services, and Seattle Clemency Project.

5.15.25 WSP: OCO staff visited the intensive management unit (IMU) and spoke with incarcerated individuals who live in IMU South. The staff also visited the BAR units, close custody, and met with several DOC staff members including facility leadership.

5.16.25 WSP: OCO staff visited the camp and spoke with the incarcerated population. OCO staff also met with DOC staff to discuss concerns.

5.16.25 SCCC: OCO staff attended the second SCCC Alliances meeting, spoke with attendees, volunteer sponsors and celebrated the new LGBTQ group.

5.22.25 SCCC: OCO staff attended a CARES meeting and held a listening session, which included identifying action steps. OCO staff also visited with individuals in the IMU.

June Monitoring Visits

6.5.25 AHCC: OCO staff met with staff and incarcerated individuals.

6.6.25 CRCC: OCO staff met with staff and incarcerated individuals and attended a meeting with leadership to discuss issues regarding violence and drug use.

6.9.25 WCCW: OCO staff met with individuals and discussed the recent report released by OCO.

6.9.25 MCC: OCO staff met with incarcerated individuals to discuss OCO work.

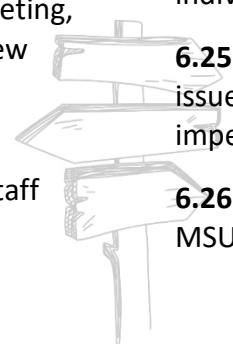
6.12.25 MCCCW: OCO staff met with facility leadership and incarcerated individuals in Gold and Bear units. OCO staff also visited incarcerated individual in SHU.

6.12.25 MCC-TRU: OCO staff attended the 2nd graduation of individuals in the Freedom group at TRU, a project aimed at helping people safely leave active gang activity.

6.12.25 SCCC: OCO staff participated in a Wealth of Wellness CARES meeting with incarcerated participants. OCO staff also met with individuals in IMU and provided self-advocacy information.

6.25.25 MCCCW: OCO staff met with individuals to talk about GRE issues, re-entry centers and issues related to health care and the impending move of incarcerated women to WCCW.

6.26.25 MCC: OCO staff met with individuals in the A unit at TRU and MSU.



6.27.25 AHCC: OCO staff attended the AHCC Local Family Council meeting and the AHCC Pride event. Staff also toured the new Sage area under construction and met in unit with individuals with open OCO cases.

Reentry Center Visits

1.8.25 Olympia Reentry Center: OCO staff toured the facility, met with residents.

2.12.25 Helen B. Ratcliff Reentry Center: OCO staff met with DOC staff, toured facility and met with residents.

2.12.25 Reynolds Reentry Center: OCO staff toured the facility, met with residents and DOC staff.

2.20.25 Peninsula Reentry Center: OCO staff met with facility manager, toured completed renovations of the facility.

3.18.25 Reynolds Reentry Center: OCO staff visited with residents and spoke with staff.

5.14.25 Ahtanum View Reentry Center: OCO staff spoke with individuals and verified there is food to eat at this facility and the people who live here have access to food throughout the day.

6.10.25 Reynolds Reentry Center: The OCO received a report related to unsanitary conditions at this facility. OCO staff completed a monitoring visit and confirmed the facility was clean and did not have any bugs or rodents.



OCO Quarterly Meetings

Every three months, the OCO hosts quarterly meetings inside a DOC facility as well as outside for community partners to attend. Quarterly meetings provide an opportunity for OCO to report out about our work, and they also provide an opportunity for OCO to receive feedback and information that helps to guide the work of the office. We encourage people to attend OCO quarterly meetings and to ask questions and share feedback with us.

Since 2023, OCO has hosted quarterly meetings inside facilities and has now held a quarterly meeting at every prison in Washington. During our meetings, OCO staff typically host small group conversations with incarcerated people as well as DOC Headquarters and facility staff. The OCO held our first facility quarterly meeting of 2025 at Olympic Corrections Center on April 18, 2025. **Our next facility quarterly meeting will take place at Sky River Treatment Center at Monroe on July 17, 2025.**

The OCO also hosts community meetings quarterly. All interested community members are invited and encouraged to join us. OCO posts all community meeting times on our website at www.oco.wa.gov. **Our next community quarterly meeting is scheduled for July 16, 2025.**

Reports & Publications

2024 Annual Review of Unexpected Fatality Review (UFR) Reports, Committee Recommendations, & Corrective Action Plans, published January 10, 2025

As required by RCW 43.06C.080, the OCO reviewed the status of all UFR Committee recommendations made in FY 24. Of the 26 action items, the OCO found that the WADOC:

- Completed 20 action items from UFR CAPs
- Submitted proposals for two action items (pending funding review and approval)
- Is in progress on four action items

The OCO expressed concerns that the UFR Committee's "Consultative Remarks" (those that the WADOC determines to be outside of the direct cause of death) were not formally managed or assigned to staff to ensure follow-up has occurred. In Fiscal Year 2024, the UFR Committee provided 63 recommendations that WADOC labeled as Consultative Remarks. Of the 89 recommendations from the UFR Committee, WADOC created CAPs for 29% and chose to designate 71% of the recommendations as Consultative Remarks for WADOC to consider.

Additionally, the OCO expressed concern about two of the top causes of unexpected deaths in WADOC: overdoses and suicides. We again urged the WADOC to implement: (1)

meaningful, and universally available, substance use disorder treatment and (2) state-wide access to 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline services inside prisons.

After negotiations, the WADOC agreed to three recommendations made by the OCO in this report:

- Recommendation 1: Convene quarterly Unexpected Fatality Review Committee process meetings.
- Recommendation 2: Track, assign, and respond to Unexpected Fatality Review Committee "Consultative Remarks."
- Recommendation 3: Prioritize access to the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline inside WADOC prisons.

Spotlight - Addressing Dental Care Delays, published February 11, 2025

Through individual case investigations and systemic reviews from 2022-2024, the OCO identified concerns:

- Delayed, cancelled, and rescheduled appointments
- Long wait times for testing and treatment
- Dentists scheduling fewer than five patients a day
- Limited dental staffing and availability
- Limited data and tracking of backlog

- Patients on mechanical soft diets for long periods of time while awaiting dentures

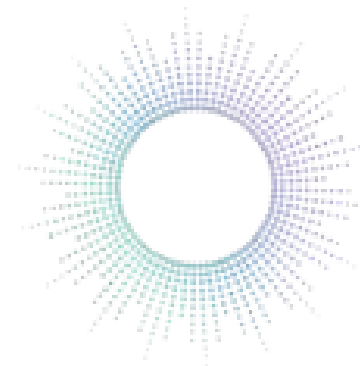
The DOC has agreed to ensure dental appointments are set by the scheduling specialists with a goal of increasing the number of appointments. DOC created a scheduling tool that outlines the typical timelines needed for different procedures so that schedulers can build schedules that match community standards. DOC also moved forward with staffing and preparing the traveling dental clinic.

If you have filed a resolution request (grievance) through the Resolution Program and your dental needs are still not being met, call or write to the OCO to open a new case.

Use of Force & Restrictive Housing Policy Violations at Washington Corrections Center for Women, published June 9, 2025

The OCO issued a detailed investigative report related to uses of force and restrictive housing policy violations at WCCW. The OCO issued and DOC agreed to four recommendations stemming from the findings of the investigation:

- Recommendation #1: The DOC should implement a timeline for the superintendent's review of DOC 410.200 Use of Force.
- Recommendation #2: The DOC should provide immediate training for WCCW staff on the proper use of OC spray, restraint application, respirators, and decontamination stations per DOC 410.200 Use of Force.
- Recommendation #3: The DOC should regularly audit use of force incidents at the Headquarters level.
- Recommendation #4: The DOC should deploy more resources to WCCW to assist with facility staff training.



OCO reports and DOC responses are available on Securus tablets and in DOC law libraries.



Case Investigation Highlight

Reported Concerns: Person reported that he uses a wheelchair and cannot walk. Person said that DOC staff came to transfer him but did not have a special wheelchair transport van as required by his HSR, so officers lifted him out of his wheelchair and carried him onto the bus. This occurred on two consecutive days. When they arrived at the new facility, staff refused to accept his transfer because the facility could not accommodate wheelchairs. The person was then served three infractions for refusing to get off the bus, even though it was the facility who refused the transfer, not the person.

OCO Actions: The OCO confirmed that this individual uses a wheelchair and requires special transport. The OCO reviewed the infractions and alerted DOC to these concerns. The OCO then asked DOC to dismiss and remove the infractions from his record.

Negotiated Outcomes: The DOC agreed and removed the infractions.

At right: Gardens at Washington State Penitentiary.



DOC Policies Under Review

The OCO monitors DOC policies pending review and provides comments regularly. Policies currently under review at DOC (as of 7.3.25) are:

- DOC 240.100 Food Services Program, Religious, Cultural/Diversity, and Family Centered Events
- DOC 380.200 Supervision of Individuals in the Community
- DOC 390.570 Supervising Special Sex Offender Sentencing Alternative Individuals
- DOC 390.600 Imposed Conditions
- DOC 400.360 Polygraph Testing
- DOC 420.311 Dry Cell Search/Watch
- DOC 470.540 Group Violence Reduction Strategy
- DOC 590.320 Residential Parenting Program
- DOC 890.020 Confined Space Program

**People who are incarcerated can provide comments by sending a kite to the DOC Headquarters Policy Office or via mail to:
DOC Headquarters Policy Office, PO Box 41100, Olympia, WA 98504-1100**

Legislative News

During the 2025-2026 legislative session, the OCO tracked numerous bills that impact the OCO, DOC, and incarcerated individuals in Washington state prisons and reentry centers.

Bills that were passed, signed by the Governor, and are effective as law beginning July 2025 include:

- SB 5182- “concerning programs and services for incarcerated parents at DOC” changed CPA eligibility to include those who are expected to take over duties of a parent and be responsible for day-to-day care and control of a minor.
- HB 1123- “concerning sexually violent predators” made changes to the civil commitment process and prosecutors’ access to records.
- HB 1815- “concerning prison riot offenses” provided that individuals convicted of said offense while incarcerated in DCYF facility can apply for vacation and relief.
- SB 5029- “concerning the transportation of individuals released or discharged from the custody

of DOC” now requires that if DOC has made arrangements with a nonprofit organization for a person’s release, DOC must make efforts to coordinate the timing of release including transportation.

- HB 1185- “concerning membership on CI advisory committee” modified the requirements of the members as well as the number of members.
- SB 5032- “expanding duties of the Office of Family and Children Ombuds to include juvenile rehabilitation facilities operate by DCYF”
- SB 5093- “concerning dignity in pregnancy loss” requires DOC to report to DOC annually about incarcerated people who experience miscarriage, stillbirth or perinatal loss.
- SB 5139- “concerning reentry council” modified the requirements of the members as well as the number of members.
- SB 5219- “concerning partial confinement eligibility and alignment” modified CPA eligibility.
- SB 5388- “concerning DOC behavioral health certification” changes the law so that SUD treatment services do not need to be licensed by DOH, but those services must be provided by individuals licensed by the state of Washington. Also, the bill directs DOH and DOC to jointly adopt standards for providing behavioral health services to people in

correctional facilities. Beginning July 1, 2027, DOC must fully implement the standards and DOH must begin conducting annual inspections to determine compliance.

Except for Section 12 (vetoed), Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill No. 1131 is approved and signed by the Governor.

- HB 1131- “concerning clemency and pardons board” modified the requirements of the members as well as the number of members.



Construction Training Pathways

In 2024, the Legislature passed HB2084 directing the Office of the Corrections Ombuds to establish an oversight committee for expanding access to construction-related training programs in Washington correctional facilities and strengthening pathways for incarcerated people to advance from those programs to state registered apprenticeships upon reentering the community. To accomplish these tasks, the Construction Training Pathways Oversight Committee was established and is comprised of representatives from the Department of Corrections, the Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Department of Labor & Industries, the Statewide Reentry Council, formerly incarcerated individuals, and other entities interested in this work. The committee meets on the fourth Friday of each month and will report back to the Legislature on initial findings, concerns, and recommendations by October 1, 2025.

At right:
Office of the Corrections Ombuds staff visit
Trades Related Apprenticeship Coaching (TRAC) training facility at
WCCW. The TRAC program is operated by Correctional Industries and
currently available in women's facilities.





This page:
OCO staff held a quarterly meeting at Olympic Corrections Center and toured the woodshop and Therapeutic Community (TC) program space in April 2025.



Concrete Mama Podcast-WSP



DEMAR

ANTHONY

RED

CAMBO

VIK

The Concrete Mama Podcast is now available on SecurUs tablets!

The podcast so far has covered the lives and stories of Anthony Covert and Demar Nelson and has included some interesting peeks into the history of WSP, both concrete and paranormal.

New episodes are being released weekly. People who are incarcerated can listen via the Endovo application. People who are not incarcerated can find the podcast on all podcast platforms.



The OCO hotline hours of operation are:

Monday	1:00 – 3:00 PM
Tuesday	1:00 – 3:00 PM & 4:00 – 6:00 PM
Wednesday	1:00 – 3:00 PM & 4:00 – 6:00 PM
Thursday	1:00 – 3:00PM

OCO confidential hotline is free
and not monitored by the DOC

(360) 664-4749

You can also write to the OCO:

Office of the Corrections Ombuds
P.O. BOX 40009 Olympia, WA 98504

'Till next time....