

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDS NEWSLETTER

JAN/FEB 2024

What's new with the OCO?

2024 Legislative Session

This year's legislative session began on January 8, 2024, and is scheduled to end on March 7, 2024. The legislature has considered several bills that impact incarcerated individuals and the OCO. Check out the details on three bills the OCO is watching:

- **HB 2001** – Providing judicial discretion to modify sentences in the interests of justice. This bill passed the House and was introduced to the Senate but was not heard in committee.
- **2SHB 2084** – Establishing an oversight committee to improve construction-related training and pathways to state registered apprenticeships in state correctional facilities. This bill passed the House and Senate policy committees and now has been referred to Senate Ways and Means.
- **E2SHB 2065** – Recalculating sentencing ranges for currently incarcerated individuals whose offender score was increased by juvenile convictions. This bill passed the House and Senate policy committees and now has been referred to Senate Ways & Means.

Recent OCO documents uploaded to your tablet (FYI App):

- December 2024 Monthly Outcome Report (MOR)
- January 2024 Monthly Outcome Report (MOR)
- Jan./Feb. 2024 Monthly Newsletter
- Prison-Initiated Disciplinary Process Recommendations



FACILITY VISITS

12.7.23 MCC – OCO staff met with facility leadership and residents.

12.9.23 WCC – OCO staff attended the Winter Event.

12.14.23 WCC – The OCO attended the biweekly meeting of the Black Prisoners' Caucus.

12.19.23 MCC – OCO staff visited incarcerated individuals in their living units at TRU.

1.8.24 MCCCW – OCO staff met with tier reps regarding the OCO Quarterly Meeting.

1.16.24 MCC – OCO staff met with individuals in TRU.

1.17.24 WCC – OCO staff met with individuals throughout the facility including the infirmary.

1.19.24 MCCCW - OCO staff presented Quarterly Public Meeting to individuals and facility leadership.

1.24.24 MCC – OCO met with individuals for solitary confinement interviews and with facility leadership team.

1.25.24 CBCC - OCO met with individuals for solitary confinement interviews and with facility leadership team.

1.30.24 OCC – Staff visited the SHU, kitchen, and met with residents of the camp and facility leadership.

The OCO's Forecast...

What to expect from us in the future:

- The OCO will travel around the state and visit all reentry centers in 2024.
- OCO is presenting at the Statewide Reentry Council meeting in March.



a message from the OCO Director
Caitlin Robertson, PhD

Recently, I was in a conversation about books, reading, and the power of shared libraries. I got to thinking about how important the power of reading is in building beneficial, community connections and developing the capacity for feeling empathy and concern for others, while also strengthening positive self-images. Five books, in no particular order, that have helped shape my thinking and feeling are: **(1) Man's Search for Meaning** by Viktor Frankl; **(2) Thick and Other Essays** by Tressie McMillan Cottom; **(3) Changing Lenses: Restorative Justice for Our Times** by Howard Zehr; **(4) Evicted** by Matthew Desmond; and **(5) A Prisoner in the Garden: Opening Nelson Mandela's Prison Archive** by The Nelson Mandela Foundation. What's your list of five books?

DOC Policy 450.100 Mail for Individuals in Prison includes an attachment "**Publication Guidelines.**" It states that, "(2) Individuals may receive new books, magazines, newspapers, calendars, and newsletters in any language sent directly from the publisher(s) and or verifiable business. (3) Individuals may receive used books in any language from non-profit organizations approved by the Director for Correctional Services."

The most current list of DOC-Approved, Non-Profit Book Groups, in alphabetical order:

- Books Through Bars
- Books to Prisoners
- Christian Motorcycle's Association (CMA)
- Edgar Cayce's Association for Research and Enlightenment, INC. (A.R.E. Press)
- Estelita's Library
- FreeBibles.net
- International Association for Human Values (IAHV)
- Lakota Language Consortium
- LGBT Books to Prisoners
- Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry (or Orthodox Christian Publishing)
- Post-Prison Education Program
- Prison Book Program
- Prison Library Project
- Prison Scholar Fund
- Prisoners Literature Project
- Women's Prison Book Project

OCO Assistance Provided Highlight

Chase Rapach - ERO 2 - worked on a concern regarding an incarcerated individual with a valid medical condition who was infractioned for failure to provide a sample for a urinalysis (UA). The person tried to appeal their infraction explaining their medical condition and age; however, DOC upheld the initial decision. Chase's investigation found that the incarcerated individual had been asked for a UA sample prior to his initial evaluation by Health Services. This person was issued a Health Status Report (HSR) for an extra hour to provide a UA the day after making the request to his medical provider. The OCO also substantiated multiple delays with initial physical evaluations at the receiving center, which impacted the timeline of this incident. All this information was presented to DOC facility leadership, who agreed with the OCO's request and overturned the individual's infraction.

OCO Confidential Hotline Hours

Call us: (360) 664-4749

Mon: 1:00-3:00 pm

Tue: 1:00-3:00 pm; 5:30-8:00 pm

Wed: 5:30-8:00 pm

Thurs: 1:00-3:00 pm

Write to us:

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Correspondence with the OCO is confidential and is not monitored by the DOC. RCW 43.06C.060