

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2024

What's new with the OCO?

Trauma Informed Care & Trauma-Responsive System Transformations

As the field of research into the impacts of adverse childhood experiences on our long-term emotional and physical health deepens, OCO staff are actively exploring ways to improve our internal practices and procedures. At the OCO, we recognize that traumatic experiences impact how people handle common demands in life. It's not enough for us to say we know that trauma affects people. We believe that our work must empower individuals whose vulnerabilities place them at disproportionate risk for adversity.

Beginning in early 2023, all OCO staff started working directly with the Center for Trauma Responsive Practice Change to enhance our individual and our agency's trauma responsiveness. We are learning new ways to not only empower ourselves but the communities we serve. As we continue to study and practice, we hope that you will see and feel the positive impacts of our staff working from a trauma informed way of being.

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

- March 2024 Monthly Newsletter
- February Monthly Outcome Report (MOR)
- JAN/FEB 2024 Monthly Newsletter
- January 2024 MOR

FACILITY VISITS

2.1.24 SCCC – OCO staff met with Washington Way Resource Team and individuals housed at this facility.

2.2.24 WCCW – OCO staff met with incarcerated individuals in the segregation unit.

2.8.24 & 2.9.24 WSP – OCO staff met with individuals in IMU North & South, the BAR units, and COA.

2.9.24 SCCC – OCO staff met individuals in various living units and facility leadership.

2.15.24 WCC – OCO staff spoke with members of the BPC, the Concerned Lifers Organization and the Native American Tribes & Federally Recognized Indian Tribes of Washington.

2.21.24 SCCC – OCO staff met with tier reps and facility Health Services leadership. They also spoke with individuals in the IMU and general population.

2.21.24 MCC – OCO staff met with the individuals in the IMU, and Sky River Treatment Center.

2.23.21 WCC – OCO staff attended the Black Prisoner's Caucus Friday evening meeting.

2.28.25 AHCC – OCO Director visited dental clinic and spoke with Health Services about long wait times for dental care.

Director's Corner



a message from
Caitlin Robertson, PhD

Happy Spring!

At the OCO we know that new ideas and innovations can spring from complaints.

FYI - In the Northern Hemisphere, the vernal equinox arrived on March 19, 2024. The word equinox derives from two Latin words: aequus (equal) and nox (night). During the vernal (spring) equinox, the Earth's axis and its orbit line up so that both hemispheres get an equal amount of sunlight. There are two equinoxes in a year : Vernal & Autumnal. At the equator, the sun is directly overhead at noon on both equinoxes. This year, the vernal (spring) alignment happened on March 19th at 8:08 pm Pacific Daylight Time.

Onward!

The OCO's Forecast...

What to expect from us in the future

- The OCO Quarterly Community meeting will be held with incarcerated individuals at Stafford Creek on April 19, 2024.
- The Solitary Confinement Report will be published by the end of June.

OCO Assistance Provided Highlight

E.V. Webb, ACO-Investigations, worked on a concern reported by an external person regarding an individual's access to cancer care and they requested that this person be released to receive medical care. EV set up a call with the patient and discussed the individual's medical concerns and the process for Extraordinary Medical Placement (EMP). E.V. later confirmed that the DOC was reviewing the patient's EMP application. Finally, E.V. confirmed that the patient is on DOC's cancer care tracker, scheduled for follow up appointments, and a PRCS-PET scan. The results from the PET scan will determine next steps in this individual's treatment plan. E.V. provided all this information directly to the patient along with next steps to follow up on medical care.

Why the word Ombuds?

In Scandinavian "ombudsman" means representative or proxy. Some organizations use the term Ombudsman and others use Ombudsperson. We at the OCO use Ombuds to communicate to the widest possible community.

What is the United States Ombudsman Association (USOA)?

The USOA is a national organization for public sector ombuds offices whose purpose is to assist existing ombuds organizations in improving the operations of ombuds offices throughout the country. Many OCO staff are active members of the United States Ombudsman Association (USOA) and the OCO Director is the co-chair of the USOA Public Safety Chapter.

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