

# OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONS OMBUDS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2024

## What's new with the OCO?

### National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE)

The OCO is a NACOLE Agency Member, and our director is an active member of NACOLE's Jail and Prison Oversight Committee.

NACOLE is a non-profit organization that works to create a community of support for independent, civilian oversight entities that seek to make their local law enforcement agencies, jails, and prisons more transparent, accountable, and responsive to the communities they serve. NACOLE was established in 1995.

The Jail and Prison Oversight Committee works on strategies to increase the number of resources, trainings, and support available to those advocating for or practicing civilian oversight of jails and prisons. The members work to expand the number of jail and prison oversight entities throughout the US.

Individual OCO staff regularly meet with our NACOLE colleagues from across the US. We are often working similar complaints and collecting comparable data on much of the same concerns. By developing robust professional relationships with our corrections oversight colleagues, we are learning new ways to help bring about positive change in the WA corrections system.

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

- 🚩 April 2024 Monthly Newsletter
- 🚩 March 2024 Monthly Newsletter
- 🚩 OCO Spotlight: Candles Allowed for Religious Ceremonies
- 🚩 February Monthly Outcome Report (MOR)

## FACILITY VISITS

**March 5 at CCCC:** OCO staff attended a presentation for individuals enrolled in the CPAT program, and met with individuals in their living units.

**March 8 at WCC & WCCW:** OCO staff and members from the Prison & Jail Innovation Lab met with facility leadership and visited the reception center, receiving units, and IMU. OCO staff provided on-site, self-advocacy information to many while visiting WCCW.

**March 8 at MCC:** OCO staff attended the RTU workgroup meeting and met individually with people living in the Sky River Treatment Center. OCO also met with facility leadership.

**March 12 at SCCC:** OCO staff met with incarcerated individuals in their living units and later with DOC staff regarding clothing donations.

**March 17 at WCC:** OCO staff met with incarcerated individuals in the IMU.

**March 24 at MCC:** OCO staff attended the MCC Alliances LGBTQ+ meeting and participated in meeting activities.

**March 30 at CCCC:** OCO staff met with individuals and facility leadership.

## Director's Corner



a message from  
Caitlin Robertson, PhD

**Happy April!** Lately, I've been thinking a lot about wicked problems. My working definition of a wicked problem is a set of complex challenges that defy straightforward solutions.

A lot of the work of the OCO can be categorized as a wicked problem, and I think that's why I'm fascinated with how we help resolve significant issues in the WA corrections system.

My current thought process to help resolve a wicked problem looks like this:

- 1 Gather data and information to help us holistically understand the problems.
- 2 Analyze and make meaning out of the collected data and information.
- 3 Recognize that each wicked problem is essentially unique.
- 4 Identify what symptom(s) of another problem this wicked problem is.
- 5 Go back to 1 with the new wicked problem and keep working the steps.

Our ability to produce endless possible solutions to wicked problems might be exhausting but I promise you, at the OCO we aren't exhausted by this meaningful and important work!

Onward!

## The OCO's Forecast...

*What to expect from us in the future*

- ✓ OCO staff will visit Coyote Ridge and Airway Heights in April.
- ✓ OCO staff will attend the Public Performance Review (PPR) in-person with Governor Inslee. This PPR is focused on Reentry, and will air virtually via TVW.
- ✓ The OCO Quarterly Community meeting will be held with incarcerated individuals at SCCC on April 19, 2024.

## ☀️ Spotlight: Assistance Provided ☀️

### Summary of Concern

An incarcerated individual reported concerns about a pending MAX custody program. The referral to MAX custody was made because this person received multiple infractions in the last year; however, none were violent.

### Summary of OCO Action

The OCO questioned if MAX custody was the appropriate placement for this individual because he had completed numerous MAX programs and there was no additional programming available to this person. Madison Vinson, Assistant Corrections Ombuds – Policy, met with the individual, facility leadership, and headquarters leadership, and shared OCO's concerns about placing this person on MAX custody again. Ultimately, DOC leadership agreed with the OCO and did not give him another MAX program. Madison and a member of the facility leadership team met with the individual and jointly told him that he would not receive another MAX placement and they discussed next steps for the individual.

### 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:

#### Office of the Corrections Ombuds

P.O. Box 40009

Olympia, WA 98504

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