

### May – June 2024 Monitoring Visits

#### Prisons

**5.3.24 MCC:** The OCO Director met with DOC staff working in the COA and observed physical unit improvements. She also checked on people in the COA and met with facility leadership.

**5.7.24 WSP:** OCO staff visited individuals in the IMU North and South. Staff observed the movement of incarcerated people and photographed unoccupied cells, day rooms, and yard areas.

**5.10.24 WSP:** The OCO Director met with incarcerated individuals and staff in the close custody west complex, as well as facility leadership.

**5.10.24 OCC:** OCO staff attended the Mother's Day celebration with families and the incarcerated population. Staff also met with facility leadership after the event.

**5.11.24 CRCC:** The OCO director attended the Powwow and met with incarcerated individuals and DOC staff.

**5.16.24 MCC:** OCO staff met with individuals at TRU.

**6.4.24 CRCC:** OCO staff met with members of the Asian Pacific Islander Group to discuss concerns in preparation for the OCO quarterly meeting

**6.14.24 OCC:** OCO staff attended the Father's Day fishing & BBQ event.

**6.18.24 AHCC:** OCO staff met with individuals in K-unit to discuss the upcoming quarterly meeting.

**6.18.24 SCCC:** OCO staff members attended a Mental Health event. Over 50 individuals attended and received certificates for their participation.

**6.19.24 CRCC:** OCO staff met with tier reps, peer support members, and representatives from cultural groups to discuss concerns in preparation for the quarterly meeting.

**6.20.24 MCCCW:** OCO staff attended the Local Family Council meeting in-person at MCCCW. Unfortunately, no families were able to attend, but the meeting was live streamed via Teams.

**6.26.24 MCC:** OCO staff members visited the IMU and TRU. Staff inspected the kitchen facility and cold storage units after concerns related to mold were brought to their attention. Photos were taken of the plumbing where evidence of slow leaks and suspected black mold appeared to be present.

**6.27.24 MCCCW:** OCO staff attended the promotion ceremony and celebration for successful TC program participants. Many TC program participants expressed concern related to the lack of transparency provided by DOC staff around the requirements to participate in TC and reentry planning options.



**Submit a Complaint**

**Confidential Hotline:**  
(360) 664-4749

**Mailing Address:**  
PO Box 40009  
Olympia, WA 98504

**Online:**  
[oco.wa.gov/submit-complaint](https://oco.wa.gov/submit-complaint)

## Reentry Centers

**5.9.24 Tri-Cities Reentry Center:** The OCO Director attended the Statewide Reentry Council meeting and toured the facility after the meeting.

**5.20.24 Progress House Reentry Center:** OCO staff met with several residents and with facility management

**5.23.24 Bellingham Reentry Center:** OCO staff members attended a training session with reentry center staff and members of the Washington Way program.

**6.3.24 Tri-Cities Reentry Center:** OCO staff members met with the reentry center manager and residents to discuss the Washington Way program.

**6.20.24 Peninsula Reentry Center:** OCO staff met with staff and incarcerated individuals.

## OCO Assistance Provided-Good Conduct Time

An incarcerated individual relayed concerns about an excessive loss of good conduct time (GCT) for an infraction. Madison Vinson - Assistant Corrections Ombuds, reached out to the DOC regarding this issue. Due to a lack of clarification about where each loss of GCT came from, WADOC agreed to remand the individual for a secondary hearing to get clarification about the loss of GCT. Madison informed the individual that if after the hearing they still believe the GCT loss is still unreasonable to contact the OCO for another review of the information.



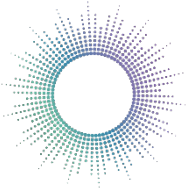
## OCO Staff Visit the New Jersey Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson

In late June, three members from the WA OCO (Heather Bates, Stella Spracklin, and E.V. Webb) spent three days with the New Jersey Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson (NJ OCO) to gain insights into their office structure and responsibilities. WA OCO staff toured the Garden State Correctional Facility, where an on-site ombudsperson is stationed, and observed the unique advantages NJ OCO employees have when working at a designated facility. Additionally, the WA OCO team met with members of the NJ OCO responsible for monitoring medical services, intake/hotline, investigations, and systemic reporting. Many NJ OCO staff are former New Jersey DOC employees with decades of experience working inside prisons.

A highlight of the trip was joining the NJ OCO all-staff meeting and meeting the 25 employees of the NJ OCO. During the meeting, WA OCO shared information about our access to healthcare records and the Unexpected Fatality Review committee. Two other special guests also joined the meeting: the NJ Comptroller, who oversees all New Jersey state agencies, and a team from the Abolitionist Law Center (ACL). Each guest presenter shared updates on their current work projects related to people who are incarcerated.



## Solitary Confinement Report: Part I Now On Your Tablets and in all WADOC Law Libraries



Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 5187 (2023-2024) included a proviso directing the OCO to prepare a report on incarcerated persons who have been in solitary confinement. The proviso directed the OCO to conduct a review of all incarcerated people who had or have been:

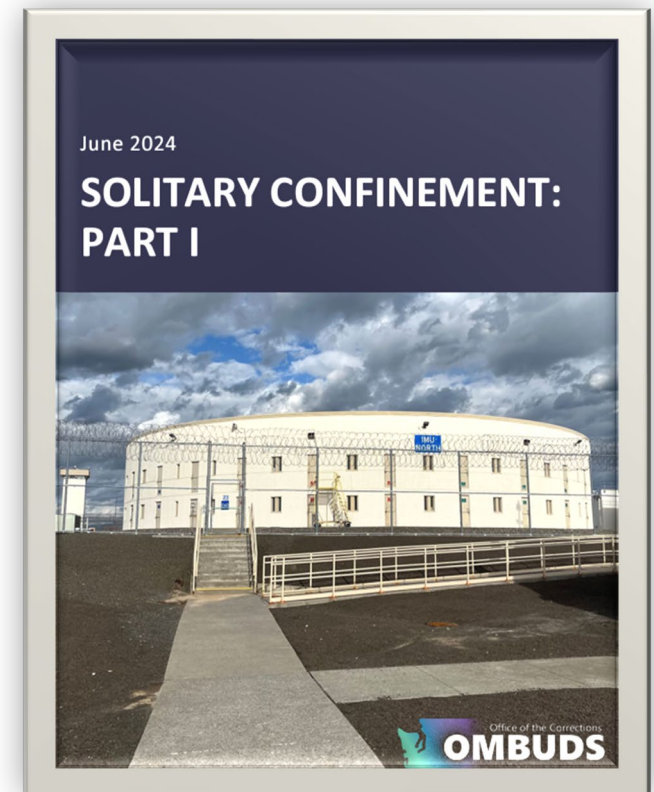
1. housed in solitary confinement or any other form of restrictive housing more than 120 days in total, or
2. housed in solitary confinement or any other form of restrictive housing more than 45 consecutive days in Fiscal year 2023 (July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023).

The proviso also directed the OCO to answer a list of specific questions about the WADOC's historical and current use of solitary confinement. The proviso directed the OCO to provide the governor and appropriate committees of the legislature with the report by June 30, 2024. **Solitary Confinement Report: Part I**, represents the OCO's compliance with this requirement.

**Solitary Confinement: Part II**, planned for release later this summer, will look deeply at the experiences, perspectives, and opinions of a sampling of people who have lived in solitary confinement in WADOC prisons.

**Solitary Confinement: Part III**, planned for release later this year, builds on Part I and Part II through a discussion of opportunities for further administrative policy changes and legislative solutions.

**If you have any questions about the OCO Solitary Confinement Report Part I, please call our hotline so we can appropriately address your concerns.**



## OCO Quarterly Meeting: Questions and Answers

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If you have questions for the Office of the Corrections Ombuds that you would like answered in the public quarterly meeting on July 26, 2024, please call the OCO hotline at

**(844) 395-7488 or (360) 664-4749.**

MON	1:00-3:00 pm
TUES	1:00-3:00 pm; 5:30-8:00 pm
WED	5:30-8:00 pm
THURS	1:00-3:00 pm

**The OCO Hotline will be closed** on Wednesday July 17<sup>th</sup> and Thursday July 18<sup>th</sup> because all OCO staff will be at Coyote Ridge Corrections Center and Airway Heights Corrections Center for our Quarterly Meetings held inside prisons.



## Director's Note

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Caitlin Robertson, PhD

Happy July! At the OCO, we've been very busy this summer working on individual investigations and putting the finishing touches on our year-long solitary confinement project. I'm so proud of the work of the OCO Solitary Confinement Research Team (OCO-SCRT), and the hundreds and hundreds of hours they spent in data review, report writing, and travelling throughout our state. The OCO-SCRT are a handful of dedicated and passionate public employees, whose work demonstrates the OCO's commitment to following Ida B. Wells' suggestion that "the way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them."

Thank you for calling our hotline, writing us letters, and stopping us in the dayrooms when we are on facility monitoring visits. Your experiences matter, and we want to make sure that our work continues to improve outcomes for all people impacted by incarceration in Washington. At the OCO, we envision a more humane and transparent Washington corrections system, and we're serious about our vision. We know that it's important that people feel heard and have the ability to give their best advice to our office. We need your feedback, suggestions, and questions – we want to hear from you.

Each day, I am full of appreciation for the many ways that my job as the agency director of the OCO fuels me with gratitude. I'm committed to being at the corrections facilities, and speaking to the people living and working inside as often as possible. Last week I was at Brownstone Reentry Center and Airway Heights Corrections Center, this week we'll be at Coyote Ridge Corrections Center and Airway Heights Corrections Center. As always, I'm looking forward to the conversations – Onward!

