

CORRECTIONS

Guide

A handbook for families and friends
of persons in custody and under supervision

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Family and Friends Corrections Guide

The Mississippi Department of Corrections created this handbook as a resource for basic information regarding rules and regulations governing Mississippi's prison system. We encourage you to use this resource to assist you in maintaining contact with your incarcerated relative or friend, thus providing support for them and staying informed on their progress.

Please note that this handbook is for informational purposes only and is subject to change. Any changes made in the MDOC's rules, policies, procedures, and state laws will override and supersede the information in this handbook.

Please also note that rules and procedures may vary between facilities within the state. Changes may also occur between publication updates and reprints. For the most current information please visit the Department of Corrections website: www.mdcc.ms.gov

To the Family and Friends of an Incarcerated Person:

In the Mississippi Department of Corrections, we foster public safety, health, and well-being. We facilitate treatment, education, and job training to equip those in the criminal justice system with the skills they need to contribute to the state's communities both inside and outside of incarceration.

We support victims and less victimization. After all, about 80 percent of individuals who enter prison return to Mississippi's cities and towns. We want to ensure they're good neighbors. Our department prioritizes inmates' relationships and connections to you, their families, and friends, as families are key to successful development and re-entry.

The MDOC recognizes that incarceration is often a difficult time for both the persons serving time and their loved ones. In order to assist you through this stressful time, we have developed the Family and Friends Handbook as a resource that provides a broad overview of the many facets of the Department and aims to answer some of the most frequently asked questions regarding the Mississippi prison system. My hope is that this handbook communicates support from your state, as well as encourages and empowers you to support your incarcerated loved ones in their journey toward renewed citizenship.

Together, we hope to build a partnership that will result in the successful re-entry of your loved ones and the continued safety of our communities.

Together, we can make a difference both inside and outside incarceration.

Burl Cain

Burl Cain
Commissioner

A peace of mind.



What you need to know
about incarceration



Locating an Incarcerated Person

To locate an incarcerated person in the Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC):

1. Go to the MDOC web site (www.mdoc.ms.gov)
2. Click on Inmate Search
3. Search by name or MDOC Number (if known)
4. Location should be listed in the biographical file presented

OR

Contact the MDOC switchboard at 601-359-5600

*The switchboard operator is located at the Central Office in downtown Jackson, and not at one of the facilities.

Provide the following information:

1. Full name of the inmate
2. MDOC Number (if known)
3. Date of birth
4. Last four digits of the person's Social Security Number if requested by switchboard operator.

If the switchboard operator is busy with another call and therefore unable to answer, or if you call on a weekend or state/federal holiday when the office is closed, your call may go to voicemail. If your call goes to voicemail, please leave the information listed above in your message in addition to your name and phone number where you can be reached. You may also call again on the next business day.

****MDOC personnel are restricted in providing information to non-family members of inmates or offenders.*** A fiancé, boyfriend, girlfriend, or close friend **are not recognized** as family members. Please have a family member call for information. Because of federal privacy laws, employees are restricted from providing any medical information.

Staying in Touch

The department encourages positive communication among inmates, family members, and friends. As such, MDOC offers several avenues of communication for inmates while incarcerated. Inmates may communicate via regular U.S. mail or telephone. Family members may also send money to inmates in MDOC custody.

Telephone Communication

Personal calls may be monitored and/or recorded for security purposes. Inmates can only make collect calls and inmate telephones are restricted to out-going calls, usually limited to fifteen (15) minutes. Inmate phones do not receive calls.

When an inmate makes a call, the called party is notified that it is a collect call from an inmate at a state prison facility. The called party can accept or refuse the call. **Telephone communication is provided by an outside vendor, Global Tel Link. The customer service number is 1-877-650-4249 for assistance.**

The department allows inmates to call approved cell phone numbers under specific guidelines. The called party must set up an account with Global Tel Link and provide primary information. Calls to prepaid cell phones are not allowed. The inmate must have the called party's phone number on his/her approved phone list.

Inmates housed in regional or private facilities must use the phone systems that are set up in those facilities. Inmates may obtain information on how to use the systems from the staff at the assigned facility.

At no time during incarceration will an inmate be allowed to legally possess or utilize a cell phone - NO EXCEPTIONS. Family and friends are warned not to send or bring cell phones to inmates. Doing so will result in prosecution for introduction of contraband into a correctional facility.

Sending mail to inmates

All mail received must be in a legal or letter envelope. Inmates may send and receive mail with exceptions. Only a maximum of seven (7) pictures are allowed with each letter, no larger than 5x7 size. Inmates may receive pictures from the following sources: Amazon, Freeprint, Pelipost, and Shutterfly. All persons in photos must be fully clothed.

All incoming and outgoing mail shall be censored only if there is possible evidence of contraband, plans for criminal activity, instructions for the manufacture of weapons, drug, or drug paraphernalia, or alcoholic beverages, threatened blackmail or extortion, coded content not understood by the reader, or activities in violation of MDOC rules.

Items **NOT ALLOWED** for inmates to receive include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Polaroid photos
- Nude, half naked, or explicitly sexual, persons in photos
- Photos showing excess amounts of cash
- Photos of loved ones in a bikini except for on a beach or at a pool
- Photos of other inmates
- Photos of any weapons or any type of alcohol
- Business cards of any type
- Copies of receipts of any kind
- Enclosed envelopes
- Calendars
- Tarot cards
- Tax forms
- Postal stamps
- Money/cash
- Stickers
- Stencil like coloring books
- Drugs
- Metal, glass, hard plastics or wooden items
- Currency, Money orders, receipts of money orders or copies of money orders
- Packages
- Cassettes/video tapes/CD's
- Hardback books
- Food items/hygiene/medical items

Cards must be signed in ink and cannot include glitter or stickers.

- No double-folded cards
 - No mechanical devices within cards such as singing cards or any kind of wiring
 - No letters or writing paper within cards
- * *Writing material, including stamps, must be purchased from Canteen*

Inmates cannot receive or send out any crafts to family. They are allowed only 12 ct. color pencils within a six-month period.

Publications must be pre-paid soft cover back books (limit of 3 per month). **All books, magazines, and color pencils must come directly from the publisher.** Six (6) newspaper clippings are allowed and no more than two pages of internet copies.

- No orders from Ebay of any type
- Subscriptions and newspapers must be sent from the publisher, distributor or vendor
All non-allowed items will be returned to sender or vendor.

How incoming inmate mail is handled

(Effective May 1, 2021)

Mailroom staff will search incoming mail as set forth in policy. Any incoming mail that does not require special handling, including photographs that staff determine an inmate may receive, shall be photocopied.

After the mail has been photocopied, all of the pages will be accounted for and assured each photocopied page is clear and legible. The front of the envelope the mail came in shall also be photocopied, so the inmate has the return address of the sender.

The photocopies shall then be placed in a reusable envelope that is marked with the inmate's name, number, and bed number. Mail will be delivered to the inmate and the envelope shall be returned to the mailroom for future use. Inmates are not allowed to have the reusable envelope. If there are health and safety concerns, the appropriate superintendent/warden may approve use of single-use envelopes.

Inmates shall notify staff immediately if the mail they receive is not legible, or they believe it to be incomplete. Staff shall then review the mail to confirm that the mail the inmate received is clear, legible, and complete. Staff shall only photocopy the mail again if the mail is unclear, illegible, or incomplete.

The original mail shall be retained for 14 calendar days. After 14 calendar days, the original mail and original envelope shall be placed in a locked bin for shredding. Mailroom staff shall continue to process incoming mail for publications (e.g., books, magazines, newspapers) according to policy.

ALL INCOMING MAIL MUST BE ADDRESSED AS:

Inmate Name & MDOC Number
Current Housing Unit
Institution/Facility Name
Institution/Facility Address
City, State, ZIP Code

Mail must include a complete return address with the following information:
Sender's Full Name, Current Address, City, State, ZIP

*Mail received without a return address will be sent to the mail recovery center unopened.

**Only white envelopes and white paper are allowed. No color envelopes of any kind are allowed.

Outgoing mail from inmates

Outgoing legal or official mail may be sealed by the inmate and will not be opened unless a visual/electronic inspection reveals the envelope may contain contraband.

EXCEPTIONS include:

- Publications must be pre-paid soft cover back books (order limit of 3).
- Subscriptions and newspapers must be sent from the publisher, distributor or vendor.
- Pre-paid publications that depict homosexuality (same as recipient), sadomasochistic, penetration of body orifice, bestiality, and/or involving children are not allowed.

ALL OUTGOING MAIL MUST HAVE A COMPLETE RETURN ADDRESS and include the following:

Senders Name & Inmate Number
Current Housing Unit
Institution/Facility Address
City, State, ZIP

Sending money to inmates

Inmates are **NOT allowed** to receive money through postal or other means.

The MDOC operates an inmate banking program under a contract with Premier Services, which can be reached by phone (**601-326-2590**) or through its internet site (**www.premier.services**).

Note: Premier Services opens at 7:30 a.m. and closes at 4 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays.

Premier is open 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Fridays.

Visitation

The MDOC recognizes the importance of visitation in maintaining inmate relationships with family and loved ones. Maintaining relationships will not only make inmates' experience while incarcerated more productive, but will also help inmates have a more successful reintegration into society. As such, visitation is an integral part of each institution.

Please note that visitation is a privilege, not a right, for both an inmate and visitor(s).

All visitors must follow rules for visitation so that they may continue to see their loved ones. Visitation privileges may be revoked for inmates and visitors for violation of rules and regulations. Visitation can be suspended at any time based on conditions inside and outside the facilities.

What will visitation look like when I participate?

In general, visitors will drive to the prison and park, leaving prohibited items and personal possessions (wallet, cell phone, purse, etc.) in their locked vehicle. Visitors will walk to the visitation processing center to register. Visitors may be searched for contraband and/or asked to walk through a body scanner. Visitors will be told to leave if they do not follow the visitation dress code.

Once processed, visitors will be directed to the visitation area and, depending on the facility, may walk there or be taken on a van or bus. Inmates will be notified of their visitors' arrival and visitors may have to wait.

If it is a contact visit, visitors will likely be in a cafeteria-type setting and allowed to touch the inmate in an appropriate manner. If it is a non-contact visit, visitors will not be allowed to touch but may communicate verbally. Visitations are supervised and will be allowed for the allotted time. Staff will signal the end of visitation and participants will return to the visitation processing center.

The information provided here applies to MDOC state facilities. Regional facilities are operated by local authorities and the two private-operated prisons may have different policies and practices. Persons should contact the specific facility where the inmate is located to check on visitation arrangements and schedules in advance of attending.

Application process

Inmates are responsible for initiating the visitation application process by sending the Application for Visiting Privileges to persons they wish to see. The visiting person(s) must complete the application and mail it to the MDOC address as indicated in the visitor application package. If the prospective visitor is a minor, his/her parent/legal guardian must complete the application.

Each inmate is allowed to fill out a visitation list with ten (10) visitors. This document is reviewed annually for updates. Immediate family members remain on the list permanently unless removed by the inmate. Any non-immediate family persons' inclusion will expire automatically unless renewed by the inmate. Persons not included on an inmate's approved visitation list will not be allowed to visit.

Visitors will be allowed to visit one (1) inmate only, unless they are related (immediate family) to another inmate. Visitors who claim immediate family relationship to an inmate may be required to provide verifiable proof of relationship.

Visitors who claim to be the spouse of an offender must provide a valid certified copy of their marriage license, as well as the location where the marriage took place (state, county, city); name of the church, courthouse, etc., where the ceremony was performed; and if possible the name of the person who performed the ceremony.

Persons on probation, parole, or other forms of conditional release will not be allowed to visit an inmate unless a verifiable family relationship can be established, and then only with the written approval of the superintendent.

No more than five (5) persons (including babies/children) will be permitted to visit an offender at one time.

All visitors age of eighteen (18) and above must have valid picture identification with them, such as a driver's license, state ID, or passport.

MINOR/CHILDREN VISITORS

Under the age of 18, must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. All visitors 16 years of age or older must have a picture ID and be on the offender's approved list each visit. The ID must display their date of birth. All children under 15 years of age will bring a legible birth certificate.

Visitors with infants may have one (1) diaper bag with up to four (4) diapers, two (2) bottles, one (1) change of baby clothes a, one (1) pacifier and diaper wipes in a zip lock bag and any necessary medication for the infant.

CURRENT OR FORMER EMPLOYEES OF MDOC

The superintendent or designee must grant permission for a former MDOC employee to visit an inmate.

Current MDOC employees wishing to visit an inmate must be of immediate family relationship and provide verifiable proof. The superintendent will approve or disapprove this type of request.

UNAPPROVED VISITORS

Individuals who are believed, through investigation, to pose a threat to an inmate or a prison will be excluded from visitation.

A visit between an offender and the offender's victim will not be permitted unless approved, in advance, in writing by the superintendent.

Individuals who are convicted felons will be prohibited from visiting offenders except in those cases where immediately family relations can be established. In such cases, the superintendent will grant permission in writing. Visitors must show this written authorization each time they visit.

PRESCRIBED MEDICATION

Visitors will be allowed to bring prescribed medication into the institution only in the necessary dosage. Visitors required to take prescribed medication during the time they are visiting an offender **MUST** follow the procedures outlined below:

- Medication will be left with the Visitor Center Officer.
- The visitor will notify the Visitor Center Officer of the specific time the medication is to be taken.
- The visitor will be permitted to recover the necessary dosage from the officer at the appropriate time.
- Visitors required to possess prescribed medication at all times, such as heart medication, must follow the procedures outlined below:

1. The visitor must submit a written request to the Area Warden prior to bringing medication into the prison's visiting area. A written doctor's statement is required verifying the name of the individual, the prescribed medication, and the fact that the individual is required to maintain the medication in his/her possession at all times.
2. Upon complying with the above, the Area Warden or designee will notify the visitor in writing of his approval.
3. The visitor must present both the written approval and the medication to the Visitor Center Officer who will verify the approval and inspect the medication vial, if necessary.
4. In addition to relinquishing the medication vial to the officer for inspection prior to entering, he/she will also do the same upon departing the institution.
5. Medication brought onto prison grounds by visitors other than as outlined above will be considered promoting dangerous contraband and appropriate action will be taken.
6. No over-the-counter medication of any kind will be permitted.

DRESS CODE FOR VISITORS

Visiting areas are designed to cultivate a family atmosphere for families and friends of all ages. Visitors must dress accordingly, wearing nothing that poses a threat to the safety, security, or good order and administrative manageability of the facility.

These guidelines are in place for the protection of visitors and inmates. Abiding by these rules will maintain order during visitation for the correctional officer, the inmate, and visitors. Correctional officers will turn visitors away for improper dress, an easily-avoidable issue. Please dress as modestly as possible.

- Shirts must be worn
- No tank tops, crop tops, bare midriffs, or sleeveless tops
- Shoes appropriate for outdoor use must be worn (no house or shower shoes)
- Underwear must be worn (including bra for women)
- No pants pulled below the hip line
- Shorts must extend to knee level or below
- Skirts and dresses shall not be shorter than one inch above the knees
- Slits shall not extend above the knees when seated
- No see through clothing
- Hats, caps, or other head coverings are not allowed, except those required by religious beliefs
- No jewelry except wedding ring, religious medallion, and/or a medical alert bracelet
- Dress code also applies to children

The following attire is NOT ALLOWED:

- Clothing that exposes bare (or almost bare) shoulders, such as strapless tops or spaghetti straps
- Overly tight clothing, i.e. yoga pants, hip huggers, jogging shorts, biking shorts, spandex, etc.
- Exposed undergarments or tops with no undergarments underneath
- No mini-skirts, cutoff shorts or pants
- Skirts, dresses, etc., cannot have deep revealing slits

VISITATION DAY

At all times while on the grounds of a prison facility of the MDOC, a visitor is subject to search of his/her person, vehicle, personal property, or any/all items in possession.

Visitors must park in the areas designated for visitation. Visitors will not be allowed to maintain possession of their personal keys while in the visitation center. Vehicles are subject to search. Guns, knives, ammunition, alcohol, drugs, weapons, or any instrument or tool that may be used as a weapon, or any other items declared by the institution to be contraband are strictly forbidden. Drug detection canines may be in use at any prison. Contraband will be confiscated and violators will be prosecuted.

MDOC policy allows regulated use of tobacco products by inmates. However, visitors cannot bring tobacco products into a visitation center. Tobacco products may be brought onto prison grounds during visitation, but must be left locked in visitors' vehicle at all times. Visitation centers are designated as non-smoking areas. Visitors must leave cell phones, wallets, purses, handbag, change purses, excessive clothing, etc., locked in their vehicles. The MDOC is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal possessions belonging to visitors while they are in or on the grounds of the prison.

Visitors must also:

- Present proper photographic identification and sign the visitor's sign-in log. All visitors will be required to properly identify themselves with Visitor ID cards, driver's license, military ID or state ID and will be required to register.
- Have the top of the right hand stamped prior to entry into the visitation center.
- Submit to a search of their person by frisk search and/or electronic scanner.
- Submit to a search of any/all items in their possession that are allowed in the prison.

Rules and procedures:

- The processing officer will instruct visitors not having proper identification to wait until all other visitors are processed. It will then be determined if the visitor can be positively identified. If not, the visitor will not be allowed to visit.
- Visitors are not allowed to enter prison grounds while intoxicated in any way.
- Inquiries concerning clarification, explanation, or errors in visiting lists should be directed by the visitor to the institution between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- Visitors who are admitted to the prison will proceed directly to the Visitation Center.
- Concessions are available in most visitation centers. Visitors are allowed to bring only enough cash for vending machines or other concessions.
- Visitors are not allowed to leave designated visiting areas and return. When a visitor leaves the designated visiting areas for any reason, their visit will be concluded for the day.
- Upon conclusion of visitation hours, visitors are not allowed to leave the prison with any items or property that was not in their possession upon entering the prison.
- Communication between inmates and visitors is prohibited after the visitor's departure from the visiting area.

- If the visitation room becomes overcrowded, the first visitors to register will be asked to exit.
- During an emergency or disturbance, all visitors will be asked to leave immediately.
- Inmates and visitors are prohibited from giving, trading, selling, or receiving anything to or from each other or other inmates or visitors.
- Children must be supervised by an adult visitor and not disturb others. Failure to supervise children may result in termination of the visit. Absolutely no toy guns or knives will be brought onto the prison grounds.
- Visitors are expected to converse normally. Loud talking or laughing, arguing or yelling, and so forth, may result in termination of the visit.
- Any visitor or inmate who becomes disruptive or disrespectful to a prison staff member will be reported and the visit immediately terminated.
- Inmates and visitors must keep the area clean (i.e., all cans, paper, paper cups, and other trash will be placed in trash containers).
- Inmates who have non-contact visitation are restricted from having physical contact with visitors by a barrier such as a screen or glass. Phones or speakers are typically used in these interactions.

AFFECTIONATE BEHAVIOR

Affectionate behavior is accepted and expected; however, visitors and inmates are expected to demonstrate appropriate affectionate behavior during visitation.

Appropriate affectionate behavior is defined as: (1) a brief kiss and embrace upon entry and exit; (2) holding hands; (3) walking or sitting with arms around the shoulders or waist; (4) hands resting on any part of the body not considered sexual.

Any person involved in inappropriate behavior may have their visit terminated immediately. Inappropriate affectionate behavior is defined as:

- Touching or fondling of areas considered sexual
- Sexual activity
- Prolonged body kissing or body embracing
- Lip kissing except for beginning or end of visit
- Sitting in such a manner so as to expose to view areas of the body considered sexual
- No sitting in each other's lap – does not apply to children under the age of 12 years

TERMINATION AND SUSPENSION OF VISITATION

A visit will be denied or terminated and visiting privileges suspended by the superintendent or designee for any of the following circumstances:

- If a visitor is under the influence of drugs or alcohol or in possession of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, or drug paraphernalia while on prison grounds.
- If a visitor refuses to submit to a search
- If a visitor refuses or fails to produce sufficient identification or falsifies identifying information
- If a visitor violates visitation rules
- If a visitor fails to prevent children from acting in a disturbing and disruptive manner
- If a visitor displays excessive physical contact with an inmate
- If in the judgment of the respective Unit Administrator, necessary order and security cannot be maintained, action will be taken to terminate the visit
- If the visitor is improperly dressed
- If a visitor possesses money or any negotiable instruments while on prison grounds.
- If a visitor possesses a knife, firearm, explosives or explosive material while on prison grounds.
- If a visitor engages in any behavior which may be designated inappropriate by the superintendent or designee.

Time Computation and Release

Time computation is a core business function to ensure that the orders of the court are enforced according to Mississippi laws, establishing release and eligibility dates for inmates. The intent of time computation is to record and calculate an inmate's period of incarceration and release date.

Additional factors can impact time calculation including the laws in place at the time a person committed the crime, concurrent or consecutive sentences, time served in jail before the conviction, prior convictions, additional credits earned while in prison, special conditions imposed by a judge and whether a person was sentenced as a habitual offender.

Types of releases include:

- Earned Release Supervision
- Parole
- Tentative Release
- Maximum Discharge

Earned Release Supervision (ERS)

ERS is a program whereby inmates eligible under state law may earn their conditional release to community supervision.

Parole

Parole is a conditional release that involves careful review of information and subjective assessment of risk. Parole Board members review the facts of a case and decide whether an inmate is likely to be successful in the community if released. As of July 1, 2014, inmates with nonviolent crimes must serve 25 percent of the imposed sentence and those with violent crimes must serve 50 percent of their imposed sentence.

Tentative Release Date

The anticipated date that an inmate will be released from incarceration is tentative after the application of adjustments for any time earned or credit for time served.

Maximum Discharge

The maximum discharge date is the expected release date without any allowances for early release. This date is fixed and will not change.

Mississippi Code requires that sentences for certain crimes be served in their entirety. These crimes are not eligible for parole or ERS release. This is sometimes referred to as "Day for Day". The discharge date can be shortened only by applying pre-trial jail time.

Reception and Classification

What happens when an inmate first enters prison?

When inmates first enter a state institution, they will be searched. They will be given clean clothing, a haircut (male only) and shower, and a picture ID card will be made. Their property will be searched and inventoried and they will be fingerprinted. Inmates can send home any items not allowed. The Classification, Mental Health, Medical, and Education Departments will evaluate the inmates. After all evaluations are completed, the inmates will be classified and placed in close custody (close supervision) until permanent housing is determined. This process can take between two weeks to 45 days.

Can contact be made with an inmate during the Reception and Classification process?

During the R & C process, inmates will not receive any visits. However, they may have limited telephone calls. The inmate will generate telephone and visitation lists during the R & C process.

Where is the Reception and Classification conducted?

The reception and classification process is conducted at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility (CMCF) in Rankin County near Pearl.

Classification and Custody Level Determination

All inmates are classified according to objective classification instruments and incarceration requirements necessary for protection of public safety, prevention of escape, maintenance of control and order, as well as the safety of staff and other inmates. All inmates undergo a series of assessments to determine their specific needs for placement in appropriate programs.

Custody level refers to the type of housing and level of supervision required for an inmate. Custody assignments reflect public safety as the first priority, staff and inmate safety within the institution as the second priority, and finally, institutional or inmate needs. Other factors include offense, sentence, age, adjustment potential, excessive criminal behavior, escape history, and observable behavior.

Custody levels include Minimum-Community, Minimum-Non Community, Medium, and Close.

Institutional Operations

Custody and Security

1. How are inmates informed about rules and disciplinary procedures?

During orientation inmates are advised of rules and procedures that govern them while incarcerated. An inmate handbook is accessible to inmates at every facility. As such, when inmates have questions or concerns, they should refer to the handbook for guidance and proper procedure.

Families are encouraged to understand that part of the rehabilitation process for inmates while incarcerated is learning to accept responsibility for oneself. Therefore, inquiries should be initiated by the inmate through the appropriate staff member where he/she is assigned and not through a family member. Any correctional officer can assist inmates in understanding appropriate procedures.

2. How is an individual charged with a rule violation?

If a staff member witnesses or has knowledge of any act by an inmate that is in violation of the rules or posted policies, the employee will first attempt, if appropriate, to resolve the matter informally. If the situation cannot be resolved informally, the inmate will receive a Rule Violation Report. Inmates are served with notice of charges at least 24 hours prior to a hearing.

3. What are the punishments if an inmate is found guilty?

After a finding of guilt, the Disciplinary Officer may impose a penalty for each violation. Penalties may include extra duty, loss of privileges, loss of earned time, reclassification, or restrictive housing.

4. How does an inmate file a grievance about a particular issue?

Inmates are first encouraged to speak with staff if they have an issue of concern or need. However, if for some reason communicating with a staff member is not helpful, inmates are asked to put their concerns in writing and submit the letter to appropriate staff. If these methods are unsuccessful, inmates may address the issue through the Administrative Remedy Program (ARP).

The facilities housing state inmates have ARP through which an inmate may, in writing, request a formal review of a complaint related to any aspect of his/her incarceration. Through this procedure, inmates shall receive reasonable responses and, where appropriate, meaningful remedies.

5. Why are inmates transferred to different prisons?

Inmates are assigned to facilities based on custody classification, space availability, level of care designations (medical and/or mental health), and many other contributing factors. Inmates are placed in locations that best meet their needs and the space and security needs of MDOC. Inmates may be transferred to different prisons for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to: investigations to medical, mental health, programs and classification issues. Transfer requests must be initiated by the inmate with their case manager and requests will be reviewed. There are no guarantees that a transfer request can be granted.

6. How are inmates searched?

A general search of both person and property may be conducted at any time by an officer of the opposite gender. The nature of the search can include property and pat-down (“frisk” search) of a fully clothed inmate. Employees of the same sex as an inmate may perform a strip search of the inmate without the requirement of reasonable suspicion or probable cause. A search must be approved by a warden or higher-ranking employee in the chain of command. Strip searches are documented by employees. Visual body cavity searches are only permitted under strict circumstances. Officers may perform searches using drug-sniffing dogs at any time.

7. Can inmates have personal items?

Inmates can have personal items, including items provided for them by the facility and any items purchased in the canteen. Inmates will receive a list of allowable items.

Health Care

The MDOC provides a system for evaluating the health needs of inmates entering the system, transferring between facilities, and during their period of incarceration. The MDOC ensures that the health needs of the institution are met to ensure that inmates receive the proper housing and activity assignments. State inmates with significant medical needs are transferred from a regional or county jail to a state facility.

Inmates receive medical and mental health screenings during intake. These screenings include, but are not limited to, inquiry into the inmates’ history of serious infectious or communicable illness, current illness and health problems, dental problems, substance use, possible pregnancy, and observation of behavior, mental status, skin conditions, and indications of drug use.

Inmates have access to both on-site and off-site health care, which includes specialty services such as hematology, oncology, gastroenterology, cardiology, dermatology, neurology, ophthalmology, and urology. Chronic care clinics are provided, as well as services for detection, diagnosis, and treatment of mental illness. To ensure continuity of care, MDOC facilitates the Medicaid enrollment process for eligible persons prior to their release.

8. How does an inmate make a health care appointment?

Inmates request medical attention by completing a sick call request.

9. Do inmates pay for health care services?

Yes, a minimal co-pay usually applies per visit. However, if indigent, no inmate is denied services.

10. Can inmates use their family physician to provide medical services?

No, all medical services are provided by MDOC medical staff.

11. Can medication be sent to inmates while in prison?

No, all medication will be prescribed/administered by appropriate staff.

12. What if an inmate needs to be hospitalized?

Inmates are evaluated and, if necessary, will be transported to the appropriate hospital.

13. *Are services available to pregnant inmates?*

Yes. Regulations cover pregnancy care, which includes prenatal services, monitoring, etc.

14. *What if treatment by a specialist is necessary?*

Inmates referred to outside specialists can receive telemedicine services with appropriate specialist(s) or can be seen by a specialist in an on-site clinic.

15. *Can I check on the medical status of my loved one?*

Yes, but state and federal patient privacy laws require that you be listed on the inmate's MDOC Authorization for Release of Protected Health Information form. The form includes the names of any family or friends who can receive medical information regarding the inmate in event of an inquiry or emergency. Inmates are advised to complete this form during intake. *State and federal law strictly prohibits the MDOC from providing any inmate's medical information to a person who is not included on the inmate's release form.*

Mental Health

The MDOC requires that all inmates receive a mental health evaluation and inmates are assigned to housing based upon the results of their assessment. Based on their needs, inmates can see clinicians and psychiatrists while incarcerated. Mental Health also works closely with Probation & Parole to provide a continuum of care for inmates after their release.

16. *How does an inmate receive mental health services?*

Inmates are evaluated at intake and subsequently housed in a facility capable of handling the needed level of mental health services. Inmates see clinicians and psychiatrists on-site as necessary. Requests are also made via the sick call request form as well as referrals by medical and security staff.

17. *What services are available to inmates with developmental disabilities?*

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the MDOC provides inmates with equal access to housing, programs, services, and the use of facility resources, regardless of disability.

Food Services

18. *What types of meals are served in prison?*

The MDOC provides meals that are nutritionally balanced for all inmates. All meals are served in a manner that meets the Mississippi health and safety codes. There is a standardized menu developed by a qualified nutritionist or dietician to ensure the recommended daily allowances for nutrition are met, as suggested by federal guidelines.

19. *Are therapeutic diets available?*

Yes. Therapeutic diets are provided to those inmates whose clinical findings necessitate an alteration from the regular institutional diets as part of their medical treatment plan. Therapeutic diets must be prescribed by a health care practitioner. These meals are developed by a registered dietitian.

20. *Are there special meals for holidays?*

Yes.

21. *Who cooks the meals served in prison?*

Inmates and/or contracted food service staff

Inmate Banking

22. Can Prisoners have money in prison?

No. The MDOC is a cashless system. Funds are managed through inmate banking.

23. Are inmates paid for work while incarcerated?

Yes. Inmates participating in the MPIC program are eligible to earn certain wages for their work. These rates are determined by state laws. Please note that there are different jobs while imprisoned, and those different jobs may have differing payments and wages. Earned funds are deposited into the inmate's account.

24. Do inmates receive their money when released?

Yes. Inmates receive their funds immediately after release. If an inmate is released to another facility, his/her funds follow him/her. Inmates are not released with cash.

25. Can inmates buy personal items?

Yes. State inmates can purchase limited hygiene, food, and other personal items through canteens at each prison. The privilege of purchasing items is based on an inmate's behavior and custody level. The MDOC reviews and modifies items placed on the canteen order form for purchase on a quarterly basis.

Victim Services and SAVIN

Mission Statement

The Division of Victim Services (DVS) assists victims during the criminal justice process, providing sustainable services through collaborative efforts.

Overview

The DVS provides services to victims of inmates under the jurisdiction and/or supervision of the Mississippi Department of Corrections. The victims or designees must be registered to receive inmate information to include release from custody, status of interstate compact, consideration for medical release, status of supervision, parole review and disposition. Additional services are available including accompanying victims to parole meetings, providing referrals, collecting victim impact statements and letters, and assisting with complaints.

The Mississippi State-wide Automated Victim Information and Notification (SAVIN), which offers access to state and county status changes, is also available. Search and registration are available online by accessing www.vinelink.com, or by 24hr operator assistance by calling 888-9-MSSAVIN, TTY 866-847-1298 for the hearing impaired.

Victims or designees must complete the DVS registration form to receive services and exercise their rights. All applicants are verified by DVS/SAVIN prior to acceptance.



Change Your Thoughts; Change Your World

Pre-Release

The Pre-Release Program is designed to prepare inmates for a successful re-entry upon their release from incarceration. While incarcerated, inmates are offered programs and services that will assist them in becoming a productive member of their communities. The programs and services provided are designed to focus on improving the inmate's employability and social and human relations skills in order to facilitate a successful reintegration back into the community.

Vision:

- To provide proper release planning and connecting inmates with the appropriate services and support systems in the releasing communities.

Goals:

- To ensure the assessment of clients for risk needs related to recidivism through evidence-based programming.
- To provide support and services that will increase the opportunity for a successful reintegration and success as citizens.
- To provide inmates with access to employment opportunities after release by offering access to job readiness and employment services.

During the last six months to one year of an inmate's incarceration, it is crucial that the inmate receives adequate pre-release planning to minimize risks, such as lack of access to educational opportunities, homelessness, unemployment, inability to afford medical care, and lack of transportation. All of these are covered in the Adult Education, Smart Start, Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT), and Thinking for A Change programs.

- Adult Education provides educational opportunities for inmates to develop and/or enhance their academic skill levels. As participants increase their skill levels, they will work towards receiving a High School Equivalency (HSE).

- Smart Start prepares participants for skilled level employment. Participants will develop employability skills and learn and practice good work habits and effective communication necessary for successful employment, such as career awareness, communication, team work, problem solving, critical thinking, and employer expectations. Participants can test for the National Career Readiness Certificates (NCRC).

- Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) is an effective systematic, cognitive-behavioral approach that treats a wide range of issues including substance abuse, domestic violence, trauma, parenting, and job skills.

- Thinking for a Change (T4C) incorporates research from cognitive restructuring theory, social skills development, and the learning and use of problem-solving skills. T4C is comprised of 25 lessons that build upon each other, and contains appendices that can be used to craft an aftercare program to meet ongoing cognitive behavioral needs of your group. Ideally, the curriculum is delivered two times per week, with a minimum recommended dosage of once per week and a maximum of three times per week.

Prior to an inmate's release, if eligible, he or she will receive the following:

- Valid Identification Documents (state identification card, Social Security Card, and birth certificate),
- Medicaid,
- Social Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI),
- SNAP Benefits.

Referrals for participation in the pre-release program can be made by MDOC staff or self-referrals via letter to the unit case manager.

Re-entry Programs

The Re-entry Program is a comprehensive program designed to assist inmates in identifying career interest, developing resumes, conducting job searches, becoming financially aware, and developing new positive behaviors that will affect their real world experience. Inmates who undergo re-entry programming are privy to an array of programs and services such as:

- MDOC's Commercial Driver's License Program — The curriculum includes a combination of technical skill development, soft-skills training, vocational education and eight (8) days of an on-site CDL instructor, hands-on classroom instruction, and a tractor trailer simulator that prepares inmates for truck driving training.

- Vital Record and Benefit(s) Application and Submission — Re-entry specialists assist inmates to obtain items needed for successful community re-entry such as Social Security cards, birth certificates, driver's license/identification cards, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Social Security and Medicaid benefits.

- Second Chance Act Re-entry Initiatives — Assistance includes interdisciplinary treatment planning services and re-entry support for inmates with a mental illness and substance use disorder. The assistance is supported by a grant that is fully funded by the Bureau of Justice within the U.S. Department of Justice.

- Empowering People Illuminating Change (EPIC) — The MDOC, in a joint venture with the Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH), created the MDOC's first Medication Assisted Treatment program. Its purpose is to treat inmates who suffer from opioid abuse/addiction. Vivitrol is utilized for intervention. As participants, inmates are assessed and supported by a multi-disciplinary clinical assessment team including case managers, educators, parole/probation agents, psychiatrists, nurses and allied health staff who help to triage inmates' biological, psychological and social needs. The clinical assessment team works with inmates while incarcerated and up to 12 months after release to provide support resources needed to ensure the inmates' overall wellness and successful community re-integration.

Community Corrections Facilities

Community Work Centers (CWC) house minimum custody inmates. This program allows eligible inmates to work approved jobs in the community while they are still incarcerated. Inmates routinely perform work for cities, counties, state agencies and charitable organizations as defined by 501(c)3. Some examples of the jobs include janitorial work, mechanic work, and beautification of roadsides. Participants can re-establish dignity and self-esteem and participation helps their transition back into the community as responsible adults.

In addition to employment requirements, participants are encouraged and, in some cases, mandated to attend educational substance abuse and job skills programs. Inmates are drug tested often. Failing a drug test results in a rule violation.

The **Community Work Centers** have been shown to reduce recidivism by:

- Providing new job skills and positive work habits.
- Reunification of the family prior to release.

How does an inmate get assigned to a community work center?

Several criteria include, but are not limited to:

- Inmates must be within eight years of their earliest release date.
- Inmates must pass a drug test.
- Inmates must be able to physically perform the work required.
- Inmates must be free of rule violations for three months.

There are several factors that automatically disqualify inmates from community work centers.

Inmates convicted of the following charges are disqualified:

- Escape or attempt in the last five years;
- Sex crime convictions;
- Child abuse or crime convictions involving a minor or handicapped person;
- Arson;
- Carrying a concealed weapon;
- Convictions of a concealed weapon; and
- Violent or sexual offenses which received a plea bargain to a non-violent crime

Technical Violation Centers

The MDOC operates an alternative sanction program for male and female parole and probation technical violators. A technical violation is the act or omission by the probationer/parolee that violates a condition or conditions of probation/parole placed by the Court, Parole Board, or the Probation Agent. The Technical Violation Center (TVC) is where violators are housed to undergo the sanctioned programs.

The Commissioner or designee determines the location and bed capacity of each TVC.

The MDOC provides programs and services equipped to address the underlying factors that led to the violation as identified based on the result of a risk and needs assessment.

Each TVC includes the following programs and services:

- Alcohol and Drug Programming which has shown to reduce recidivism and reduction in the use of illicit substances or alcohol.
- Employment Preparation & Training Programs
- Cognitive Behavioral Programs
- Education Programs

Time allotted in the sanction program is determined by the court or the Parole Board and usually ranges between 90-180 days.

Restitution Centers

MDOC Restitution Center programs provide an alternative to incarceration for minimal risk individuals who are in need of a more structured environment rather than that of standard probation. Individuals serving time in a restitution center are referred to as residents rather than inmates.

Residents are court-ordered for the restitution programs and are required to work and pay full or partial payments to crime victims. Also, residents pay room and board fees and court fees and may establish a savings account. They are also required to perform a minimum of 40 hours of community service.

Restitution center programs concentrate on behavior modification, address educational needs and alcohol and drug dependency, and help residents develop work ethics and financial responsibility.

How is a resident sentenced to a restitution center?

Individuals can be classified to a restitution center three ways:

- Through initial sentencing by a judge
- Modification of probation
- Released from custody (Parole or ERS) prior to completion of their sentence

Candidates are screened for acceptance to the program prior to sentencing. In addition, other criteria must be met including:

- Offenders must not have a drug, alcohol, or emotional problem so serious that they appear unlikely to be able to meet obligation of restitution sentence;
- Offenders must be in a good mental and physical health;
- Offender must be employable; and
- Offender must have a sincere desire to participate in the restitution program.

The duration of this program varies. However, it is traditionally six months. In some instances, early dismissal can occur if the program is completed and/or fines and fees are paid.

Community Supervision

Probation & Parole

The MDOC Community Corrections Division provides for public safety; promotes opportunities for positive behavioral change in the individuals under supervision; secures provisions for community-based assistance and services needed; decreases criminal behavior and recidivism; and serves as an alternative to incarceration. The division has three regions: North (I), Central (II), and South (III). Probation and parole agents are certified and responsible for the supervision of people who are released on probation, parole, Intensive Supervision Program ISP (house arrest), and Earned Release Supervision (ERS). Agents also supervise people who relocate to Mississippi from other states through Interstate Compact.

The agents' main goal is public safety and to reduce recidivism. Therefore, successful re-entry is key. While on parole, an individual is supervised by an agent and must follow certain conditions as mandated by the Parole Board. Any deviation from the conditions could result in return to incarceration. An agent's objective is to keep the individual in the community once he/she is released. To do so, agents ensure those on supervision abide by conditions of supervision, identify problems and solutions, make appropriate referrals, provide general counseling, and perform arrests as needed to protect the public.

Agents maintain contact in individuals' homes, places of employment, through family and friends, as well as in the agent's office. Agents use a variety of intermediate sanctions when violations occur. Agents also provide pre-sentence investigations to decision-makers in the criminal justice system, including judges and Parole Board members. They also oversee the collection of victim restitution, supervision fees, and a variety of court imposed fines and fees.

Earned Release Supervision

When an individual is sentenced to serve time, an Earned Release Supervision (ERS) date is calculated based on an individual serving a percentage of his/her sentence, which correlates with applicable laws. For example, an offender may be required to serve 85 percent of a sentence in a facility and is eligible to serve the remaining 15 percent on ERS, if the crime was committed on or after July 1, 1995.

Many factors are considered in calculating an inmate's ERS eligibility date. For instance, an inmate's behavior while incarcerated is a key factor that is reviewed by the classification committee. An ERS date does not mean an inmate will be released on that date.

When an inmate is near his/her ERS date, he/she receives a letter from MDOC. Once the inmate receives this letter, then it is his/her responsibility to provide a residence address. Once the address is received, the address is then given to the probation/parole agent who will inspect the residence, meet with any family members that the inmate will be living with, etc., and ultimately determine if the residence is acceptable for the inmate to live while on ERS.

Any individual under ERS retains inmate status and remains under the jurisdiction of MDOC. Inmates under ERS are not allowed to leave the state of Mississippi at any time during his/her ERS. If an inmate violates any conditions of ERS, the inmate has to serve the remainder of the sentence in a facility. Any time served on ERS is not applied to the sentence or used to reduce a sentence.

In case of a violation of conduct, the inmate is arrested, returned to MDOC and given a classification hearing by a classification committee officer. If the inmate is found not guilty of the violation, the inmate may be returned to the original status on ERS.

Conditional Medical Release

The Commissioner and the department's Chief Medical Director may place a nonviolent inmate on conditional medical release (CMR) regardless of time served. Violent inmates must serve at least one (1) year of their sentence before being eligible for CMR. Inmates convicted of a sex crime are not eligible.

The Commissioner will not place an inmate on CMR unless the Chief Medical Officer certifies to the Commissioner that (a) the inmate is suffering from a significant permanent physical medical condition with no possibility of recovery; (b) that his/her further incarceration will serve no rehabilitative purposes; and (c) that the state would incur unreasonable expenses as a result of his/her continued incarceration.

Any inmate placed on CMR shall be supervised by the Division of Community Corrections for the remainder of their sentence. An inmate's CMR may be revoked and the inmate returned and placed in actual custody of the department if the inmate violates an order or condition of CMR.

Interstate Compact

The MDOC is a member of the Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision, which includes eligible jurisdictions within the United States and its territories. The Interstate Compact Division monitors the supervision of individuals within the state of Mississippi and member states.

Probationers and parolees may submit an application for transfer to another state by contacting their probation/parole agent, case manager, or parole releasing authorities. Several compact forms must be completed and an application fee of \$50 must be submitted at the time the transfer is requested.

Intensive Supervision Program

Intensive Supervision Program (ISP), commonly referred to as "house arrest," is an alternative program to incarceration. Individuals sentenced to house arrest must wear an electronic monitoring device at all times. Depending on the sentence, individuals are required to be at home during certain times of the day. If at any time an individual is not at home during the required curfew, an ISP agent is immediately notified. If necessary, a warrant is issued for arrest if the individual is not at the required location and considered to have escaped.

An individual can be sentenced to ISP only by a judge. House Bill 585 became effective July 1, 2014, and removed the MDOC's authority to release individuals on house arrest.

Mississippi State Parole Board

The Mississippi State Parole Board is an integral part of the criminal justice system. It consists of five members, one of whom is the chairman. All members are appointed by the governor, with the advice and consent of the Mississippi Senate. The Board has exclusive responsibility for the granting and revocation of parole.

The Board reviews cases and develops plans, stipulations, conditions and terms for release or integration for each inmate. The Board can grant parole, refuse parole, or revoke the parole of those individuals convicted of a felony, sentenced to the custody of the MDOC and deemed eligible under the Mississippi Code of 1972.

The Board can be reached at 601-576-3520.

What is Parole?

Parole is a carefully constructed bridge between incarceration and return to the community. It is by no means an automatic release. The conditional release involves a careful review of information and assessment of risk. This requires that Board members review the facts of a case and decide whether an inmate may be permitted to return to the community before the end of the incarceration term.

Parole allows some individuals to continue to serve the balance of their sentence outside of an institution. It doesn't mean that inmates are completely free while under supervision. It does mean that they have an opportunity under the supervision and assistance of a parole agent to become contributing members of society providing they abide by the conditions of their release. If the conditions of parole are not followed, the Board has the power to revoke the parole and return the individual to prison.

What is the parole process?

Parole is granted when the Parole Board members are satisfied that the inmate being considered is capable of being a law-abiding citizen. Parole hearings are scheduled on a monthly basis providing sufficient time to consider every inmate who is eligible ninety (90) days preceding his/her parole eligibility date. A quorum of Board members must be present.

A parole hearing is a hearing to determine whether an inmate should be released from prison to parole supervision in the community for the remainder of the sentence. Parole depends on various factors including an inmate criminal history, crime, crime commit date, and sentence. Some inmates may be eligible for parole consideration after serving a portion of their sentence.

Although an inmate may be eligible for parole, it is not guaranteed that inmate will be granted parole. Whether an inmate is released is within the complete discretion of the Mississippi State Parole Board. A list of all inmates eligible for parole is generated each month and sent to the Parole Board. When considering whether to grant or deny parole, the Board considers a multitude of factors including, but not limited to, the following:

- Severity of offense
- Number of offenses committed
- Psychological and/or psychiatric history
- Disciplinary action while incarcerated
- Community support or opposition
- Amount of time served
- Prior misdemeanor or felony conviction(s)
- Police and/or juvenile record
- History of drug or alcohol abuse
- History of violence
- Crimes committed while incarcerated
- Escape history
- Participation in rehabilitative programs
- Arrangements for employment and/or residence
- Whether the inmate served in the United States Armed Forces and received an honorable discharge

*Victims and family members of victims can make impact statements to the Parole Board.

What is clemency?

The Mississippi Constitution grants the Governor the power of executive clemency, meaning he/she can pardon an individual for criminal offenses or commute the sentence of an individual to a lesser sentence. The Governor can grant clemency to show mercy to an individual, address a specific injustice, or correct disproportionate punishment of an entire class of inmates. This power is completely discretionary and is often viewed as an extraordinary and exceptional remedy.

The clemency request process includes several steps. First, a person must submit a completed application for clemency to the office of the Governor and then have published for thirty (30) days in a newspaper in the county where the crime was committed. The Governor may decide to grant, deny, or take no action. There are no time requirements on the Governor to make this decision.

An application for clemency can be requested from the Office of the Governor, Legal Division, at P. O. Box 139 Jackson, MS 39205-0139.

There are two types of clemency requests:

- Pardon

Pardons occur post-incarceration. To apply, an individual must have completed his/her sentence and be free of any fines or court costs. A governor's pardon forgives a person for a crime.

- Commutation of sentence

Commutation occurs during imprisonment and reduces the inmate's sentence duration to allow for early or immediate release. Immediate release occurs if the inmate has already served the length of the commuted (shortened) sentence.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How can I request for an inmate to be transferred to a different facility to be closer to family?

A. Only the superintendent or warden can submit an inter-facility transfer or a classification officer may arrange inmate transfers. Approval can depend on the inmate's progress in rehabilitation or meeting program requirements, plus the availability of bed space and the inmate's conduct. The inmate should make this request through his or her case manager.

2. Are inmates allowed to attend a funeral? If so, what is the process?

A. No. However emergency leave is allowed to attend visitation or wakes when circumstances allow, pending approval.

3. What do I do if the Commissary is not accepting my funds for an inmate?

A. The inmate may be in the classification process whereas he or she can only receive personal hygiene products. Also, any violations of prison rules can result in restrictions.

4. What information can I obtain about an individual in MDOC custody, if I am not a family member (i.e. girlfriend/boyfriend or fiancé)?

A. MDOC personnel cannot provide information about inmates to non-family members. Individuals seeking information should have a family member of the inmate contact MDOC. Family members need to be on an inmate's contact list.

5. *How can I find out how much time an inmate has to serve and what credits he or she can receive?*

A. Check the MDOC website and search for the inmate by name or ID number. Contact the inmate by written letter for information on what credits an inmate is eligible to receive. The inmate can contact his/her assigned case manager for this information.

6. *Whom do I speak with about an inmate's parole eligibility?*

7. *Whom do I speak with to find out why an inmate's parole request was denied?*

A. For both questions, you may contact the Mississippi State Parole Board at 601-576-3520.

8. *How can I find out the exact release date of an inmate so I can arrange to pick up the person, and what arrangements should I make?*

A. The inmate's case manager will notify him or her of his or her release date and ask the inmate about travel plans. The information is then verified.

B. If an inmate requests to travel by bus, a ticket is purchased on his/her behalf to the destination or the nearest city of the destination. MDOC, however, does not purchase tickets for out of state travel.

C. The release process can take anywhere from 30 to 45 days. An inmate must receive a discharge certificate before being released. An inmate should keep in contact with his or her case manager, and when notified of the release date, relay that information to family and friends on the inmate's contact list.

9. *Why hasn't an inmate been released on the expected release date?*

A. Parole and ERS eligibility dates are not guaranteed release dates. The inmate must meet the eligibility requirements for those programs as outlined in MDOC policy and by law.

10. *Who is responsible for overseeing house arrest and how can an inmate be placed on house arrest?*

A. House arrest is a function of the Circuit Courts. Contact the sentencing judge or the Court. MDOC cannot grant house arrest; however, agents supervise individuals on house arrest.

11. *I haven't heard from [an inmate] for a long time whereas we once talked regularly. How can I find out if he/she is ok?*

A. In most cases, the prison chaplain of the facility where the inmate is located can assist you.

12. *How can I find out the status of a request for address approval?*

A. The inmate should make a request through his/her case manager for the status of the approval.

13. *Whom do I speak with about medical issues regarding an inmate?*

A. Federal privacy laws prevent MDOC and its medical provider, VitalCore, from discussing inmate medical conditions.

14. *How can I find out about an inmate's eligibility date for Earned Release Supervision (ERS)?*

A. Inmates are given a timesheet showing his/her eligibility date and they can relay this information to family.

15. *How can I find out the reason an inmate's ERS was denied?*

A. Whether an inmate is released on ERS includes the following factors: Complete history of institutional conduct; program participation; severity of offense; victim/community opposition; time served; and gang activity during current incarceration. One or a combination of these factors can affect ERS status. An inmate is informed of any denial and they can relay this information to friends and family.

16. *How do I find out who an inmate's case manager is and how to contact him/her?*

A. You may call Offender Services at the facility where the inmate is located.

17. *Whom do I contact about problems getting payments to go through Western Union for supervision fees?*

A. Contact Fiscal Caseload Management at 662-489-7628 or 662-489-7628.

18. *How do I get information to an inmate who has had a death in the family?*

A. The prison chaplain of the facility where the inmate is located will contact the inmate.

19. *I have been released from incarceration and still have money left on my inmate banking account. How do I get this money returned to me?*

A. Contact Premier Services at 601-326-2590 to make the necessary arrangements.

20. *How are arrangements made to have an inmate served with legal papers?*

A. Contact the Inmate Legal Assistance Program office where the inmate is housed.

21. *An inmate is scheduled to be released but there is a hold or detainer. Whom do I speak with about the hold or detainer?*

A. Contact the Records Office at Parchman at 662-745-6611 ext. 2508

22. *If I am a victim of an inmate's crime, whom do I speak with regarding what information am I entitled to have?*

A. You may contact the MDOC Division of Victim Services at 601-359-5628.

23. *How do I report my opposition to an inmate being released on parole, ERS, or conditional medical release?*

A. You may contact the Mississippi State Parole Board for parole releases or the MDOC Division of Victim Services for releases on ERS or CMR.

24. *How can an individual under supervision find out who their probation/parole agent is?*

A. The offender should contact the probation/parole office of the county where he/she is assigned.

25. *How can I change who serves as my probation/parole agent?*

A. The offender should request to speak to the current agent's supervisor.

Terms and Definitions

Classification: A process for determining the needs and requirements of those for whom incarceration has been ordered and for assignment to appropriate housing units and programs.

Criminogenic Needs: Criminogenic needs are characteristics, traits, problems or issues of an individual that directly relate to the individual's likelihood to commit another crime. These are also structural elements of a person's life that personally led them to commit a crime.

Criminogenic Risk: Risk factors that research shows increase an inmate's likelihood of recidivating and returning to incarceration.

Custody Level: The type of housing and the level of supervision required for an inmate. Custody assignments shall reflect public safety as the priority, staff and inmate safety within the institution as the second priority and finally, institutional or inmate needs. Other factors will also be considered in all classification decisions.

Division of Victims Services (DVS): A Division that offers crime victims easy access to information and registrations.

Earned Release Supervision: A program based on an inmate serving a percentage of his/her sentence, which correlates with applicable laws

Expiration of Sentence: Upon the completion of the “full-term” of the sentence, a person is released. No additional supervision is imposed after release.

Graduated Sanctions: Intermediate penalties (jail or non-jail) used for various violations committed by a person on probation or parole in lieu of returning to prison. These sanctions are enforced by the Probation and Parole Agents.

High Risk: A classification designation for an inmate that is based on the score on the validated Risk/Needs Assessment tool.

Parole: A term of early release granted by the Parole Board from physical custody to community supervision.

Parole Eligibility Date: The earliest date the inmate is eligible for parole release. The release date is only valid if parole is first granted by the Parole Board. *The parole eligibility date is NOT a release date.*

Reception & Classification (R & C): The admission procedure by which an inmate is evaluated, tested, and interviewed. The inmate’s security level, custody level, and risk need assessment shall determine the inmate’s permanent facility assignment in accordance with Agency regulations.

Re-entry: The process of transitioning an inmate back into the community from imprisonment, probation, or parole supervision.

Restitution: In the criminal justice system, this term means payment by an inmate to the victim for harm caused by the inmate’s wrongful acts. Courts have the authority to order restitution payment to victims as part of their sentences.

Victim Impact Statement: A statement that describes the emotional, physical, and/or spiritual impact a crime has on the victim, the victim’s family, and/or the community.

Violation: Any behavior, actions, or inaction that goes against the conditions of supervision.

Acknowledgements

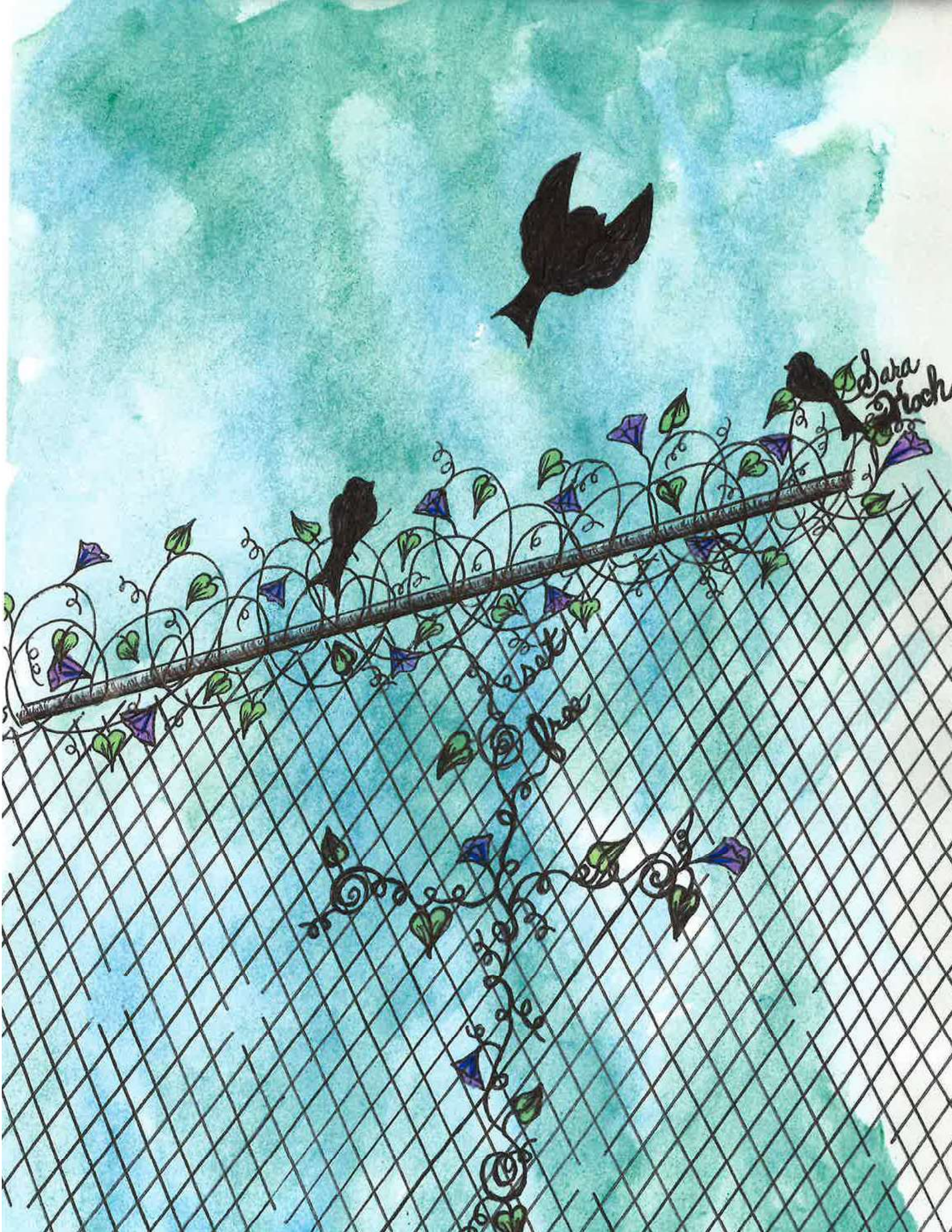
* The images featured on the cover, section divider pages, and the back cover are the products of an art contest held in contribution to this publication. The following inmates were recognized for their winning work:

Front Cover - Breaking through the walls - Jared Rebold

Page 10 - State of Mississippi Outline - Kim Daily

Page 34 - Magnolia Flower - Charlie Smith

Back Cover - Bird of Freedom - Sara Koch



Sara
Stoch