

# COVID-19 BEHIND THE IRON DOORS

The Impact on Native American Religious Services & Cultural Programming within Oregon State Prisons During a Pandemic

Northwest Indian Health Board

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Trish Jordan, RN,BSN

RED LODGE TRANSITION SERVICES



# The Road to Incarceration

Historical  
Trauma

Physical, Sexual,  
Emotional  
Abuses

Substance  
Abuse

Poverty

Hopelessness

Associates

Community  
norms

Profiling

Gang affiliation

Drug economics

- ▶ Under-educated
- ▶ Mental health issues
- ▶ School to Prison Pipeline
- ▶ Dysfunctional family dynamics
- ▶ One or both parents have been incarcerated
- ▶ Wrong place at the wrong time...
- ▶ Intimate partner initiated
- ▶ No boundaries/PTSD
- ▶ Human trafficking victim

# WHAT IS NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS SERVICES?

- Cultural and spiritual programming
- Talking Circle
- Drum Practice
- Smudge
- Sweatlodge
- Pipe Ceremony
- Wellbriety
- Parenting Classes
- Behavioral health classes
- Pipe Ceremony
- Hair Cutting Ceremony
- Medicine bags and medicines
- Giveaway
- Sacred Foods Ceremony
- Pow Wow
- Spirit Run
- Winter Solstice Sweat
- Art projects
- Flutes
- Special guests
- Native American Heritage Month

Programming is dependent on volunteers and space being provided  
Each Prison is its own little Island

# WHY IS NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS SERVICES NEEDED?

- ▶ Connection to Spirit
  - ▶ Behavioral Health
  - ▶ Holistic values
  - ▶ Sense of belonging
  - ▶ Personal identity
  - ▶ Foundation upon which to rebuild
  - ▶ Healing the Wounded Spirit
  - ▶ Adult mentoring
  - ▶ Respect for all life
  - ▶ Maintain cultural and tribal sovereignty
  - ▶ Lifeline to community
- Native Americans are incarcerated at a rate of 38% higher than the national average
  - Native Americans are 3X more likely to be killed by police than any other racial group
  - and religious freedom for an almost invisible population
  - 70% of youth taken into federal custody are Native American (1)
  - Native Americans experience violence at 2 X the national average (2)
  - Native people need to connect with one another
  - Reentry begins upon incarceration



Spring Celebration 2006, Coffee Creek Correctional Facility





Photo Courtesy of OPB- Root Digging near  
Sinnashio, OR





Root digging April 2019 near Simnashio,  
OR Photos courtesy of OPB





Photo courtesy of OPB- Root  
digging near Simnashio, OR  
April, 2019







Photos Courtesy of OPB- Spring Celebration  
Coffee Creek Correctional Facility  
Minimum and Medium Unit 2019



Photo Courtesy of OPB- Red Lodge Ladies  
preparing for Spring Celebration 2019





Photo Courtesy of OPB- Elder helping  
prepare food for Spring Celebration 2019





Photo Courtesy of OPB- Preparing  
for Spring Celebration 2019





Photo Courtesy of OPB- Coffee  
Creek Correctional Facility. Spring  
Celebration 2019





Photo Courtesy of OPB- Coffee Creek Correctional Facility  
Spring Celebration, 2019







Photo courtesy of OPB, Snake River  
Correctional Institution, Aug. 25, 2010



Deer Ridge Correctional Institution 2018







Two Rivers Correctional Institution 2018





Santiam Correctional Institution 2017





Photo courtesy of OPB. Snake River  
Correctional Institution Aug. 25, 2019



# COVID-19: Infections Among U.S. Prisoners Have Been Triple Those of Other Americans

- Over 1,400 new Adult in Custody infections and seven deaths, on average, have been reported daily
- Social distancing is not an option
- Testing was not a priority early in the pandemic
- One in three AIC in state prisons have had the virus
- 2,700 inmates have died according to the New York Times research tracking
- More than 525,000 reported infections nationwide in our prisons
- Deaths could have been prevented according to public health officials and Criminal Justice experts
- Disorganized response to virus in most prisons
- Over 138,00 prison and jail correctional officers and other workers were sickened and 261 died
- Oregon Dept of Corrections taken to Court and ordered to vaccinate ALL inmates who request immunization
- New strains of the virus are a real concern!
- <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/04/10/world/covid-vaccine-coronavirus-cases>



Oregon State Penitentiary 2008 Big Yard Pow wow







Columbia River Correctional Institution and Forest Camp Pow wow 2011



TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3	TIER 4
Institution without symptoms of COVID-19	Institution with confirmed COVID-19	Institution with confirmed COVID-19 AND expanded testing	Entire institution quarantined for 14 days
Screening questions for staff upon entry to building. Temperature taken	Heightened employee screening protocol	Continue heightened employee screening protocol	Continue heightened employee screening protocol
All institutions test according to screening presentation	Quarantine housing block or work space which positive AIC came from	All symptomatic staff shall seek medical care and testing via community care, requesting priority handling for COVID-19	All symptomatic patients tested for COVID-19. Conduct symptom interviews daily.
Suspected COVID cases put into respiratory isolation/distancing	Close contacts identified symptomatic AIC placed in isolation	Quarantine of the housing block. Conduct symptom interviews of all patients daily	If any new cases identified while entire institution in quarantine, the 14 day observation period re-starts
All Intake AIC's screened and quarantined for 14 days	If any new cases- Expand contact tracing and proceed to tier 3	If any new positive cases, expand contact tracing and proceed to tier 4	If 6 feet distancing is not possible, face coverings required to be worn by all staff
If 6 feet distancing is not possible, face coverings	If 6 feet distancing is not possible, face coverings	If 6 feet distancing is not possible, face coverings	



## Early Medical Release Eligibility

Who does not Qualify?	What are the Criteria?	What should AIC Submit to be considered?	How long will the process take?
An AIC who has not completed a minimum term of incarceration under Measure 11	The age of the AIC	Information on the factors listed under criteria. DOC medical staff approval	Several weeks to several months
An AIC who is serving a sentence that is not eligible for a sentence reduction	<b>A medical authority's</b> determination of whether the AIC is unable to move from place to place without assistance	DOC director or <b>designee's</b> recommendation	Safe placement secured within the community and medical continuation of care
An AIC who is sentenced to life in prison	Whether the AIC has a terminal illness, life expectancy less than 12 months	Board of Parole makes final decision	Reviewing medical documentation and getting feedback from DOC takes time
An AIC who is prohibited under any other applicable state law	Whether advancing the release date is compatible with the best interest of society		





Deer Ridge Correctional Institution 2017



Deer Ridge Correctional Institution 2017







Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution 2012



# Two Rivers Correctional Institution Largest Workplace COVID-19 Outbreak in Oregon!

- 48.9% of AIC confirmed positive
- 13 deaths at TRCI in January 2021
- 434 positive cases in January 2021 (789 total cases 48.9%)
- Six housing units out of power Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> to Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>
- Sack lunches for days
- Tier 4 lockdown for weeks at a time
- Limited showers and phone calls due to lockdown
- No visitors
- Mail is slow





Spring Celebration 2016 Coffee Creek Correctional Facility



Institution	Employee 1 <sup>st</sup> case	Total positive	AIC (Adult in Custody) 1 <sup>st</sup> case	Total Positive	Spike	Total Population % positive
CCCF	06/10/2020	43	09/15/2020	240	Dec-Jan	858 (28%)
CCIC	09/15/2020	12	Unknown	85	Unknown	unknown
CRCI	09/21/2020	25	12/05/2020	258	Dec-Jan	514 (50.2%)
DRCI	11/03/2020	45	09/05/2020	283	Dec-Jan	734 (38.6%)
EOCI	06/08/2020	76	07/07/2020	459	July-Nov	1,592 (29%)
MCCF	12/01/2020	15	12/12/2020	40	Dec-Jan	164 (24.4%)
Non Inst.	08/01/2020	30	N/A	N/A	Oct-Jan	Unknown
OSCI	08/05/2020	42	09/27/2020	252	Oct-Jan	798 (31.6%)
OSP	03/27/2020	123	05/02/2020	386	May-June Dec-Jan	1,485 (26%)
PRCF	08/24/2020	20	12/12/2020	69	Dec-Jan	238 (29%)
SCCI	05/12/2020	7	04/10/2020	27	Dec-Jan	153 (17.7%)
Red lettering indicates evacuation during fires						



Institution	Employee 1 <sup>st</sup> case	Total positive Employee	AIC (Adult in Custody) 1 <sup>st</sup> case	Total Positive AIC	Spike	Total Population % positive
SCI	04/03/2020	34	04/03/2020	119	Dec-Feb	455 (26.2%)
SFFC		0	03/06/2020	4	Dec-Feb	155 (2.6%)
SRCI	06/23/2020	230	07/03/2020	494	July-Aug Oct-Jan	2,932 (16.8%)
TRCI	04/30/2020	127	05/20/2020	769	Aug-Oct Dec-Jan	1,693 (45.4%)
WCCF	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown		Unknown
TOTAL AIC and Employee Population	(4,404 employees)	829 positive  18.8%	(12,404 AIC)	3,485 positive  28.1%		
Total Deaths				42		0.33%
Total Native American Deaths				4		9.5%



Photo courtesy of OPB. Snake River  
Correctional Institution August 25, 2019

