



# OREGON CURE

Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants

The mission of Oregon CURE is to support the incarcerated and their families and friends by advocating for effective criminal justice policies and procedures.

Winter 2025, Volume 78

A Newsletter for Incarcerated People and their Families and Friends

P.O. Box 80193, Portland, OR 97280 | (503) 844-9145



## Changes to the Mail Rule Effective 1/13/2025

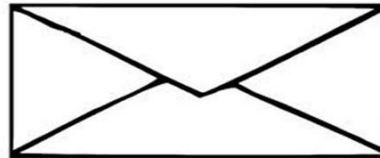
Effective January 13, 2025, the Mail Rule has been revised to address concerns regarding safety, security, and the well-being of both Adults in Custody (AICs) and staff. Mail postmarked after this date will be subject to the revised rule.

**Some of the new requirements that friends and family of AICs should be aware of include:**

- Incoming mail must be in pen, lead pencil, or be typewritten or photocopied.
- Incoming mail must be written on standard weight (20 pound or less) white paper. This is standard copy/print paper.
- Incoming mail must be enclosed in a commercially produced envelope using standard weight (20 pound or less) white paper that is no larger than 9" x 12".

**There are no changes to the Legal Mail requirements**

More information is available on the DOC website:  
<https://www.oregon.gov/DOC>  
or email  
[DOC.Mailroom.Questions@doc.oregon.gov](mailto:DOC.Mailroom.Questions@doc.oregon.gov)



**Examples of items that will be refused:**

- Any non-white envelope
- Envelopes larger than 9" x 12"
- Envelopes that are not commercially produced
- Envelopes made of cardboard, padded, corrugated, or tear-resistant material
- Envelopes constructed of heavy weight paper (that is, greater than 20 pound) or with security screening features
- Cardstock (such as is used for greeting cards and postcards)

**Greeting cards and postcards are not allowed.**

There is a chatbot that answers mail rule questions in real time and the above FAQ that can be found here: <https://sites.google.com/view/oregon-doc-mail-processing-faq/home>. The ODOC plan is that it will be integrated onto the official DOC website eventually, so the Google site is hopefully just temporary.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## REENTRY AND RELEASE COMMUNITY OUTREACH SESSION

Oregon CURE has collaborated with Oregon DOC to bring about quarterly meetings that address Release and Reentry. It is hoped that those joining the meetings will find them to be helpful and informative. There will be an opportunity to ask questions at the end of each presentation.

These meetings will take place from 6PM to 7PM the first Tuesday of the following months:

- **February, May, August and November**
- **The first meeting will take place Tuesday February 4th.**

The Reentry and Release Community Outreach Session, organized by the Oregon Department of Corrections Reentry and Release Unit, aims to support incarcerated individuals who are nearing release from custody. The session offers a valuable opportunity for friends and family of those preparing for release to understand the processes, timelines, and available services that their loved ones will navigate during this transition. The session will cover:

- **Timelines and Processes:** Explanation of the key steps in the release process, including when and how incarcerated individuals will engage with release counselors, transition coordinators, and the benefits team.
- **Support Services:** An overview of the various services offered to assist in the successful reintegration of individuals back into the community.
- **Q&A:** Reentry and Release staff will address general questions from attendees, but specific case-related questions will be directed to the incarcerated individual or their assigned release counselor, provided that a release of information form is signed by the individual.

This session is in partnership with **Oregon Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants (CURE)**. By attending, family and friends will be better equipped to understand the release process and support their loved ones in the months leading to their release.

### Quarterly Meeting Details

- **Start Date:** February 4th, from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM
- **Meeting Link:** [Join the meeting now](#)
- **Meeting ID:** 236 196 526 738
- **Passcode:** Hi3sg33T
- **Dial-in Information:** +1 971-277-2160, 629436211# (United States, Portland)
- **Phone Conference ID:** 629 436 211#

## SALEM / KEIZER SUPPORT GROUP MEETING INVITATION

If you're reading this newsletter, you probably have some connection with the prison system in Oregon, or perhaps another state. Whether having become involved recently or for a longer period of time, you know the uncertainty that comes with the often chaotic and confusing world of the criminal justice system. My name is Wayne Armstrong, I am a co-facilitator of the CURE support group in the greater Salem area. Let this be my invitation for you to visit our Salem group for a safe haven where you will find understanding and help for you and your incarcerated loved one, or someone you know who is in a similar situation.

We meet at the Keizer/Salem Senior Center at 930 Plymouth Drive, in Keizer, roughly a block North off the Salem Parkway on Cherry Ave. from 9:30 - 11:30am the first Saturday of every month. Come for all or part of any meeting - any adult (no one under age please) experiencing a loved one incarcerated is welcome. Look for the yellow arrow CURE meeting sign at the Southern-most entrance on the West side of the building.

Our meeting schedule can also be found under "Support Groups" for more info; and please, feel free to call my number for more details Wayne Armstrong - 971.432.0148

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS (continued)**

### **BUS TRANSPORT TO SNAKE RIVER**

SRT-Malheur Express will provide transportation from Ontario and other locations listed on their website. According to an informational phone call, arrangements must be made by phone to get transportation. Office hours are 8am to 5pm, Pacific Time, be aware that Ontario and Snake River Correctional Institution are on Mountain Time, 1 hour later than Pacific Time. The website lists costs for transportation, cost for round trip to and from Ontario to Snake River Correctional Institution is \$22. Refer to further information on the website, <https://www.mcoacs.org/transportation>.

SRT-Malheur Express, Operated by MCOA&CS  
Return Pick Up: (541) 881-000  
After Hours Dispatch: (541) 212-9085  
GOBHI Transportation: (541) 216-4556

### **NEW MAIL RULE AND CHAT BOT**

We have placed submissions from Oregon DOC on pages 1 and 9 of this newsletter regarding the New Mail Rule effective 1.13.2025 in all Oregon State Corrections facilities. You can also find a **Chat Bot** that answers mail rule questions in real time here: <https://sites.google.com/view/oregon-doc-mail-processing-faq/home>.

The ODOC plan is that the chat bot will be integrated onto the official DOC website eventually, so the Google site is hopefully just temporary. An example of how the chat bot works is: I asked "Are colored pencils allowed"? and was immediately given this answer: "Colored pencils must be lead. Be careful because some colored pencils are wax-based, and wax-based colored pencils are not allowed". This can be a very helpful tool while learning the new mail rules and can help prevent your mail from being rejected.

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## **REHABILITATION BEFORE REINTEGRATION**

### **Education greatly empowers individuals to break free from the cycle of incarceration and build a much brighter future. Submitted by Ali M. Mattar.**

In the vast complex landscape of correctional institutions, the role of higher education for an adult in custody (AIC) cannot be exaggerated. While serving time behind bars, access to educational opportunities can deeply impact an individual's journey towards rehabilitation and eventually provide successful reintegration into society. This essay will explore the multifaceted significance of education for AIC's, highlighting its potential to encourage personal development in order to reduce recidivism and enhance employability by building confidence. Education will provide one with the proper coping mechanism that will result in establishing a positive routine, thus facilitating pro social interactions. All of these prime points will be key in allowing one, in the long run, to avoid being institutionalized.

One of the most notable benefits of higher education within correctional facilities is its capacity to facilitate personal development. Through educational programs, an AIC has the opportunity to acquire new skills, knowledge and perspectives that can positively reshape their lives. By pursuing academic studies, vocational training, or education in general, an AIC can empower themselves to expand their hidden horizons and unlock untapped potential. By nurturing their unique intellectual curiosity and critical thinking skills, higher education can equip an AIC with the adequate tools needed to navigate all the challenges life gives them during and after incarceration.

Education itself, plays an essential role in reducing recidivism rates among formally, incarcerated AICs. Studies have demonstrated a strong correlation between education attainment and decreased likelihood of re-offending. By properly and thoroughly investing in academic, or vocational opportunities while in prison, an AIC can significantly improve their prospects for successful transition back into society upon release. Education provides a pathway to proper employment, pro-social integration, and meaningful engagement; thus, breaking the cycle of incarceration and allowing for a more sustainable future.

The furtherance of higher education for an AIC enhances their employability by equipping them with valuable marketable skills, combined with solid qualifications. Given today's highly competitive job market, employers do value education and proper training as indicators of competency and commitment. By acquiring degrees, certifications, or vocational credentials, an AIC can enhance their prospects for gainful employment upon re-entry into society. Higher education of any kind opens doors to career opportunities as well as economic stability, which can greatly empower individuals to build a better future for themselves and their families.

In addition to its practical benefits, higher education also can play a crucial role in building an AIC's confidence and self-esteem. That of which they tend to lack when they first enter the prison system. What creates a sense of accomplishment and purpose for a struggling AIC is by allowing the individual to properly reach academic or vocational goals. Education also creates a very strong sense of pride. By demonstrating capabilities and newly tapped potential, an AIC can gain confidence in their ability to overcome challenges and pursue positive change. Proper education instills a sense of hope and possibility, motivating individuals to strive for a brighter future despite the many obstacles they may face.

Moreover, education serves as a constructive coping mechanism for an AIC by offering them a truly productive outlet for their time and energy. Properly engaging in educational activities allows an AIC to channel their focus and subliminal creativity towards more meaningful pursuits. AICs immersing themselves in learning can develop new interests, hobbies and positive passions that allow for a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction. Higher education empowers individuals to transform their experiences of incarceration into opportunities of personal growth and transformation.

Education absolutely contributes to the foundation of positive routines within correctional facilities. By engaging in structured educational programs an AIC can develop habits of discipline, responsibility and sincere accountability. A solid education program fosters a sense of order and purpose amidst the challenges of prison life by providing individuals with a framework for personal development and growth. Adhering to a strict schedule of learning and study will assist an AIC into cultivating habits that can serve them well by levitating their minds beyond the confines of their present environment. In the long run, this will help them avoid the grave side effects of becoming institutionalized.

Additionally, education enables pro social interaction as well as community building within correctional facilities. Classroom discussions, group projects and collaborative learning experiences allows an AIC the perfect opportunity to positively connect with their instructors and peers. These prosocial interactions create a sense of camaraderie, support and mutual respect among individuals who come from diverse backgrounds, coupled with complicated experiences. Education creates a shared space for transparency, positive dialogue, higher learning and personal development. Ultimately, eliminating animosity among AICs, breaking down barriers and promoting understanding.

In conclusion, education is extremely valuable for an AIC, as it is a key pathway to rehabilitation before reintegration. Investing in education for an AIC is not only a moral imperative, but also a practical strategy for promoting public safety, reducing the temptation of crime and creating a more inclusive and equitable society. As society strives to try and reform the criminal justice system, let us recognize the transformative power of education in unlocking the potential creativity of every confined individual regardless of their past mistakes or circumstances. Allow higher education to be a catalyst for a second opportunity for an AIC, as well as a second opportunity for society as a whole.



## A 2024 HIGHLIGHT FOR MEMBERS OF OREGON CURE



This year we were blessed to have a guided tour of the Memorial Healing Garden at Oregon State Penitentiary, and we are so very grateful. We would like to share some of our reactions/thoughts in this space here:

I was fortunate enough to go in and see the healing garden on a tour. What a beautiful garden they have. The way they developed the yard and married in the memorial to our service members is amazing. They have a Koi pond in the middle of it, which you can hand feed the fish. How peaceful is that?! It was more than I expected to find in the middle of a prison setting. Something the inmates can and should be proud of! **Steve**

I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to visit the Healing Garden at OSP! It is a beautiful and tranquil space. It was a drizzly and chilly day, and that made the experience more immersive for me. It also was fascinating to learn the history of the garden from the conception phase to the current maintenance phase. It is inspiring that everyone at OSP considers this a sacred place, and that it provides a place of serenity and peace in an otherwise less than serene environment. Thank you to our hosts during our visit. I hope to see it again someday. **Deb**

Experiencing opposite worlds existing side by side always makes me stop and embrace the magnitude of the moment. To know that in a place typically reserved for pain, heartache, regret and shame exists healing, nurturing, growth and beauty. I am reminded that the same potential exists in each of us.....depravity and greatness. Having served my own sentence for a grave crime and been given the opportunity to start anew, visiting the Healing Garden at OSP was especially moving for me. To say that the vivid colors of the koi fish were captivating is an understatement, they were mesmerizing.....in the world of freedom, I have yet to see such an intense display of color. Each stone, tree and adornment is placed with care, and thoughtfulness.....a garden of intention. It is a perfect model of the potential and potency that lies in the individuals living alongside the garden. Two seemingly opposites existing in the same space....nurturing and healing bringing about the potential for greatness out of that which has been considered condemned and dismissed. **Kyle Colleen**

It was a cold and rainy day, but that in no way diminished the beauty of the Healing Garden or the experience. I loved seeing this magnificence in a space my two sons once lived in, and am forever grateful no longer do, as they came home in 2016 and 2020 after serving 18 and 22 years. It warms my heart to know that others who are still there, many whom my sons came to know and care about during the many years they lived at OSP, have this space to experience while incarcerated; a bright light in a very dark place. The Healing Garden is such a peaceful place with the healing powers of nature; plant life, flowers, koi and trees; a refuge in an otherwise far from ideal environment. I learned so much from our tour guides and truly appreciate the time they took to educate us about everything from the planning, fund raising, and building to the care of the Healing Garden and all that lives there. That the Healing Garden is providing a therapeutic environment to those in the BHS unit in addition to all others who are able to access it, makes it a miracle of sorts and that is absolutely amazing. **Karen Cain**

I am so grateful for the opportunity to tour the healing garden with Oregon Cure. What I remembered most was the garden, surrounded by concrete walls, being so still and calm. That day, I learned the importance of finding your own personal healing garden, whether it's through art, running, or any form of expression that brings you peace and allows you to honor yourself. Thank you to the tour guides for sharing what the garden meant to them. **Olivia**

# **A PRISON REFORMER'S WISH LIST FOR OREGON IN 2025**

**by Scott Spencer-Wolff, Ph.D.**

As the holiday season comes to a close, and 2025 is upon us. This year, my wish list is not for trinkets or treasures but for systemic change in our prison systems—a list addressed to the mythical figure who, with his magic sleigh, might finally bring us the reforms we so desperately need. Here is my heartfelt "Dear Santa" plea for the upcoming year: While much of this requires legislative funding, I hope that our Legislators will be tired of the State paying millions of dollars in tort claims for medical malfeasance or, 'Correctional Officers' behaving badly (to AICs and to each other, especially of an opposite gender). I hope that legislators and others in decision-making positions will remember that 95% of those currently incarcerated will be released back into the community. How cool it would be if those folks were better off from an emotional intelligence and behavioral standpoint than when they came into the "Correctional" system.

## **1. Body Cameras for Transparency and Accountability**

It's long past time for correctional officers to wear body cameras, much like their counterparts in many police departments. These devices can serve as impartial witnesses, offering clarity in disputes, ensuring accountability, and building trust. Body cameras could provide much-needed transparency in a world often shrouded in secrecy, protecting both staff and inmates by ensuring that actions are documented and verifiable.

## **2. A Law Requiring Disclosure of Inmate Deaths**

California has set a precedent with legislation mandating the release of information about inmate deaths. It's a standard that should be adopted nationwide. Families deserve to know the circumstances surrounding their loved ones' deaths, and the public has a right to transparency in how correctional facilities operate. This change could illuminate systemic issues and drive improvements in care and oversight.

## **3. A Culture of Courage Over Fear**

Too often, those who challenge the status quo face retaliation, fostering a culture of fear. This stifles innovation and discourages individuals from discussing misconduct or proposing improvements. Reforming this culture requires robust whistleblower protections and a leadership commitment to openness and constructive criticism. There are *always* a few reasons why change can't happen. There are always an equal number of reasons why change CAN happen, and why it needs to.

## **4. Training to Transform Officer Culture**

Correctional Officer training and development must evolve. Emphasis on de-escalation, empathy, and rehabilitation over punishment can reshape the officer-inmate dynamic. It's about fostering an environment where officers see themselves as facilitators of change rather than enforcers of confinement. We seriously want to believe that most Correctional Officers working in the ODOC are sincere, hard-working, and dedicated men and women. The current "us/them" mentality isn't cutting it anymore, that us/them culture too easily bleeds over into the rest of the non-custodial staff and may be at the root of many of the other challenges the ODOC is facing.

## **5. Inclusion of Outsiders in Disciplinary Decisions**

Bringing external community members into disciplinary decision-making processes would add a layer of impartiality and fairness. Outsiders could be community members, legal experts, or advocacy group representatives, ensuring that decisions are just and not driven solely by internal biases or retaliation. If a disciplinary action can potentially affect a person's release date, hiding those proceedings behind some belief that transparency affects "peace and security" or that extrajudicial hearings must be hidden because of privacy concerns is past its time. The lack of transparency enables potential abuse, and public oversight is crucial for ensuring fair treatment and due process. Closed disciplinary proceedings make it difficult to verify whether punishments are being administered fairly and consistently. It's past time to think differently.

## **6. Improved Mental Health and Addiction Care**

Prisons have become de facto mental health institutions, yet they are ill-equipped for the role. There are, perhaps more than ever, a lot of mentally ill folks incarcerated in our prisons. Although minor changes are happening, I would love to see the legislature take some ownership of this. Increased funding and focus on mental health and addiction services are essential. Inmates need access to qualified professionals and comprehensive care plans, both during incarceration and upon reentry into society. Additionally, more formal training is necessary for officers. The "one-size-fits-all" model isn't working, and too often, people are being released to the streets without an adequate follow-up plan.

## 7. Evidence-Based Policy Changes

The recent ODOC mail rule change, implemented without clear evidence or explanation beyond vague assertions and anecdotal evidence, highlights a critical need for better record-keeping and transparency. Policies should be justified with data and reason, not decrees that resemble poor parenting “because we said so.” Much of the public who *does* care is starting not to believe what is said.

## 8. Accountability in Commissary Pricing

Commissary prices are notoriously inflated, placing an undue burden on inmates and their families. Transparency in pricing and accountability for profit margins are crucial. A commissary should not be a mechanism for exploitation but a service that respects the financial constraints of those it serves. We also want to know the relationship between the large companies providing commissary items and the companies providing phone services.

## 9. Free Phone Calls for Inmates

Many states have already taken steps to provide free phone calls for inmates, recognizing the critical role of maintaining family connections in rehabilitation. Following their lead would reduce financial stress on families and help inmates sustain relationships that are key to their reintegration.

## 10. Rebuilding Trust in Public Communications

Public Information Officers' statements often feel like deflection rather than truth-telling exercises. Honesty and openness in public communication are essential to rebuilding trust. If an Adult in Custody on post-prison supervision were to tell as many half-truths and ‘non-truths’ (for example, “The ODOC takes the death of every inmate seriously.”) But not seriously enough to provide consistently decent medical care. Or Director Reese’s recent comment about medical care. “Health care for adults in custody is a top priority at the Oregon Department of Corrections. As corrections professionals, we have a moral obligation and legal responsibility to provide quality care to those in our custody.” Faith in the system erodes when the public believes they are being lied to.

## 11. Meaningful Employment Training

Very few, if any, incarcerated individuals released from prison plan to get out and go to work on a road crew, picking up highway trash or even working in a commercial laundry, although that’s a step up from road crews (and I have long been a fan of OCE for the many positive things they do.) The old model of “teaching work skills, like getting up and going to work, ” is outdated. The traditional model of assigning inmates to menial tasks like road crews or trash collection is increasingly seen as counterproductive. However, we recognize that it produces some income for the Department of Corrections. These jobs fail to equip inmates with the skills needed to secure meaningful, real-world employment after release, perpetuating cycles of unemployment, a sub-class culture, and recidivism. While highway clean-up crews provide a valuable service, considering it “work straining” is a stretch. Modern approaches prioritize vocational training and education that prepare inmates for reintegration into a competitive workforce. To be fair, a little bit of this IS happening within the ODOC. What is the percentage of participants in these programs compared to the general population?

Remedial “make work” jobs often exploit inmate labor with little to no compensation, raising ethical concerns. This dynamic undermines dignity and ignores the potential for inmates to contribute to society more substantially. Emphasis should shift toward programs that provide inmates with *marketable* skills and a sense of purpose. The “These folks are going to be our neighbors someday...” is a bit of a marketing thing since few will have the money to live in any of the neighborhoods the folks I’ve heard this from actually live in.

The public visibility of these roles can reinforce stigma, casting inmates in a humiliating and dehumanizing light. This was part of the purpose of the Texas Chain Gang model. Investing in skill-building initiatives and rehabilitation-focused programs can break away from outdated practices and foster a system that values human potential and growth.

## Conclusion: A Season of Hope

Santa, my list is ambitious, but it’s grounded in a belief that change is possible—not only for the incarcerated but also for those whose job it is to care for them. Each item represents a step toward a system that prioritizes humanity, fairness, and rehabilitation over punishment and profit. As we enter a new year, let this be the season when we dare to dream of a better way. Critics argue that the current closed-door policy perpetuates the “us versus them” mentality that undermines the rehabilitative goals of the correctional system and may contribute to recidivism rates and staff dissatisfaction with their jobs.

There are correctional systems all around the world that are doing better. Let’s be a leader in this field and not the last to come to the table, pressed only by epic failures and monumental lawsuits taking money that could easily be spent for more effective programming. As we enter a new year, let this be the season when we dare to share our dreams of a better way.

# CHILD SUPPORT AND PARENTS IN CUSTODY

The Oregon Child Support Program provides child support services to parents who pay support and parents who receive support. We can help:

- Establish paternity
- Establish a child support order or make changes to an existing support order
- Collect and process child support payments

The info below applies if your child support order is from Oregon. (If your child support order is from another state or Tribe, you need to contact them directly as Oregon's process does not apply).

## If you will be in custody for at least 180 days

We will issue a notice to you and the other parent to suspend (stop) your child support order if you are unable to pay while you're in custody.

- If neither parent objects, your child support order suspends, and you will not have to pay while you are in custody.
- If you or the other parent object, a phone hearing with an administrative law judge will be held about your ability to pay support while you are in custody.
  - At the hearing, your income and assets will be reviewed. This includes sources such as bank accounts, trust funds, rental income, and retirement or investment income.

## If you owe past-due support

- The Oregon Department of Corrections may send payments from your trust account to us to reduce the amount you owe.
- If you are in the Prison Industry Enhancement Certification Program, we may send an income withholding order for past-due support.

## If you will be in custody for fewer than 180 days

- Your child support order is not automatically suspended.
- You may ask for your child support order to be reviewed.

## If you will be in custody for life

- The Oregon Child Support Program will review your case for closure.
- The Oregon Department of Corrections may collect money for child support from funds put into your trust account.

## What happens after you are released from custody

If your child support order was suspended after January 1, 2018:

- Your monthly child support amount does not start until the first full month after you have been released for 120 days. (Example: If you are released on June 17, your child support would start on November 1. October 15 is 120 days after June 17, and the first full month after October is November.)
- Your monthly support will be 50% of what it was before you went into custody. (Example: Your order was \$200 per month before you went into custody. On November 1, it will be \$100 per month.)
- We will review your case to see if the order amount should be changed.
- Our review will begin within 60 days from when your monthly child support amount starts. (Using the example above with a release date of June 17, we will review before December 31.)
- During the time we are reviewing your case, it is important for you to respond to contact by phone, email, mail, or your online account to help us decide the right child support amount.

If your child support order was modified to \$0 prior to January 1, 2018, the process is different.

- Your child support order will restart 61 days after you are released.
- The order amount will be what you were paying before entering custody.
- Ask us to review your case to see if the order amount should be changed.

## Credit against past-due support during a period of incarceration

If your child support order was not suspended while you were in custody for at least 180 days, you can request a credit for the past-due child support amounts. This process allows the other parent to object to a change in the amount owed.

## Contact information

Please keep us informed of any changes in your contact or employment information. For questions, contact us at:

Oregon Child Support Program

PO Box 14680

Salem, OR 97309

[ChildSupportIncarceratedParents@doj.oregon.gov](mailto:ChildSupportIncarceratedParents@doj.oregon.gov)

503-986-2565 or Customer Service: 800-850-0228

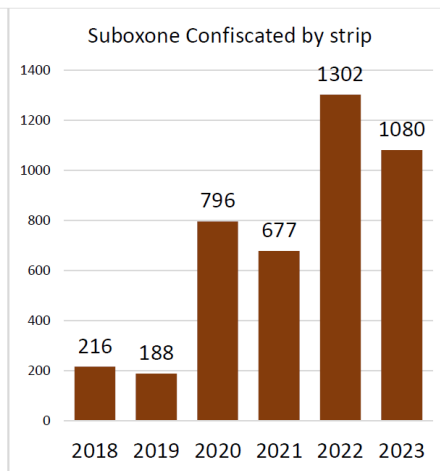
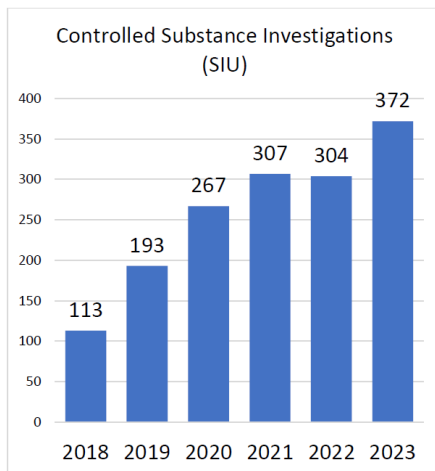


# ISSUE BRIEF FROM THE OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

**Adult in Custody (AIC) Mail Rule Revisions** - The Department of Corrections (DOC) last revised the AIC Mail Rule in 2016. The revised rule is effective Monday, January 13, 2025. Mail postmarked after this date will be subject to the new rule.

**The Need to Change the Rule** - Mail has long been a weak spot in DOC's defense against contraband introduction. While DOC strongly encourages friends and family to maintain pro-social correspondence with those in custody, the volume of drugs being interdicted in DOC mailrooms has risen to staggering levels.

**SIU/IG Data** - Investigations into contraband introduction have steadily increased, with a large portion of them having a nexus to the mail. Suboxone strips, because of their yellow/orange color which very closely matches manilla envelopes and many greeting cards, is a frequently identified item in mail confiscations.



**A Piece of the Overall Drug Interdiction Plan** - Changes to the Mail Rule coincide with other drug interdiction activities, such as the implementation of wastewater testing, increased urinalysis (UAs), re-establishing the K9 program, and establishment of more Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment programs. Policy Option Packages (POPs) were submitted for the purchase of body scanners in 2024; however, they did not make it to the Governor's Recommended Budget.

**Significant Changes** - The majority of the Mail Rule did not change. However, a few areas changed significantly enough that they will be felt by most people who communicate with AICs via the mail system.

- Incoming mail must be in pen, lead pencil, or be typewritten or photocopied.
- Incoming mail must be written on standard weight (20 pound or less) white paper.
- Incoming mail must be enclosed in a commercially produced envelope using standard weight (20 pound or less) white paper no larger than 9" x 12" (with exceptions for qualified legal and official mail).
  - Examples of envelopes that will be refused:
    - Any non-white envelope.
    - Envelopes larger than 9" x 12."
    - Envelopes that are not commercially produced.
    - Envelopes made of cardboard, padded, corrugated, or tear-resistant material.
    - Envelopes constructed of heavy weight paper (that is, greater than 20 pound) or with security screening features.
- The requirements for Legal Mail and Official Mail did not change. There will be no impact to attorneys and courts mailing correspondence to an AIC.
- Historically, victims of an AIC's *prior* crimes-of-conviction have not been allowed to write to the AIC. This rule change amends that to prohibit only victims of *current* crimes-of-conviction.

Of Note:

- Mail is processed at each facility by staff dedicated to only mail processing. Processing mail is not a part of a Correctional Officer's job duties; instead, mail is processed by Administrative Specialists.
- Correspondence is processed within two days of receipt; publications within four days of receipt.
- For AICs who are indigent, five complimentary postage-paid envelopes are provided monthly.
- Mail is never restricted as a form punishment.

# THE CRITICAL NEED FOR A FULLY SUPPORTED OREGON CORRECTIONS OMBUDSMAN by Scott Spencer-Wolff, PhD

Recently, Governor Kotek dismissed Adrian Wulff, the Oregon Corrections Ombudsman, leaving a crucial position unfilled. During his tenure, Mr. Wulff initiated several forward-thinking projects, such as the Phone Report, which recommended making phone calls free for Adults in Custody—an established practice in many states. Oregon spends MILLIONS of dollars yearly on TORT Claims, which could be better spent on programs or creative carceral innovations.

Despite his efforts and repeated requests, the Oregon Ombuds position lacked adequate support staff (or ANY) support staff, severely limiting its potential impact. For comparison, with a comparable incarcerated population, Washington State has a Corrections Ombuds Office staffed by 14 individuals. Expecting a single person to effectively address and investigate complex medical, legal, personnel, and systemic issues is unreasonable and sets the position up for failure.

Evidence suggests that Mr. Wulff faced delays, resistance, and interference when attempting to investigate the numerous critical issues within the Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC). Without adequate resources and cooperation, the Ombudsman's ability to act as a watchdog and advocate for accountability is significantly hindered.

The failure to support this reflects poorly in the State of Oregon, the Governor's Office, and the Oregon Department of Justice. Other states, such as New Jersey, Washington, and Alaska, provide models for robust, well-supported Ombuds programs. These programs demonstrate that effective oversight is both achievable and essential to ensuring humane and lawful correctional practices. Not to mention saving money.

Oregon must prioritize building a strong and well-resourced Ombudsman program. This includes funding the position itself and a dedicated team to provide the expertise and capacity needed to tackle the ODOC's diverse and pressing issues. The time for half-measures has passed; we'd all like to see some meaningful action. We know it's possible.

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## SHOP & SUPPORT OREGON CURE

You can benefit Oregon CURE when you shop at any Kroger/Fred Meyer store. Simply sign up at [Kroger.com](https://www.kroger.com). link your shopper's card if you already have one or sign up for one and choose Oregon CURE as the organization you wish to benefit from your shopping with each transaction.

Once you sign up, any transaction you make moving forward using your membership Shoppers Card number will benefit Oregon CURE at no expense to you. Kroger will donate a percentage of what you spend with them to Oregon CURE. What a great way to benefit our non-profit.

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## SUPPORT US IN OTHER WAYS

Oregon Cure appreciates your donations and support. Click to see the full QR code and scan to go directly to our PayPal link.



### HOW DOES YOUR DONATION HELP?

It pays for our phone service, post office box, and postage to correspond with those who write to us, both in the free world and the incarcerated, it pays to print and mail our newsletters, and it pays for our non-profit status.

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## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Your membership renewal date is on the address label of this newsletter. If your renewal date is expired, we ask that you please renew today to continue to receive this newsletter and to continue to support our organization.

**You can also make a donation for someone you know to become a member. Your support is important to our mission and your donation is tax-deductible.**

Send your membership tax-deductible donation to Oregon CURE, PO Box 80193, Portland, OR 97280. Please fill out the member donation form below to receive our newsletter. Adult in custody subscription donation is \$3 and Individual Non-Incarcerated subscription donation is \$15. **All tax-deductible donations are greatly appreciated and can be made in any amount. Visit our website at [oregoncure.org](http://oregoncure.org).**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
(optional)

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of incarcerated loved one / SID & facility: \_\_\_\_\_

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## PUBLICATION NOTICE

This newsletter is a publication of Oregon CURE. Oregon CURE is a 501 (c)(3) organization whose goal is to reduce crime through criminal justice reform. The opinion and statements contained in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Oregon CURE.

Contributions of articles, letters to the editor, notices, etc. are welcome but may be edited or rejected for space. Articles may be copied in their entirety with credit to the author or to the publication. Oregon CURE is an all-volunteer organization that is not a service organization. Do not send us any legal documents, we are not a legal service. We are not qualified to assist you with legal matters.

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## RELEASE ORIENTATIONS

ODOC in collaboration with Oregon CURE holds quarterly TEAMS meetings as follows: The first Tuesday of February, May, August, and November from 6pm to 7pm.

You can join these meetings through Microsoft TEAMS app or by calling in at:

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 236 196 526 738

Passcode: Hi3sg33T

**Dial in by phone**

[+1 971-277-2160,629436211#](#) United States,  
Portland

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 629 436 211#

## INTAKE ORIENTATIONS

Intake Orientations are on hold until further notice. Please look here and on our website and Facebook page for updates. Alternatively, you can call Oregon CURE at 503.844.9145 or email us at [oregoncure@gmail.com](mailto:oregoncure@gmail.com) for updates. We anticipate updated information in time for our next newsletter.

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Oregon CURE  
7805 SW 40<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
PO Box 80193  
Portland, OR 97280

**ATTENTION:**

Your address label has printed your renewal-date, below your name. This will be your last newsletter if your renewal date has passed. Renew today to remain informed!



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**SUPPORT GROUPS**

Oregon CURE support groups are intended for adult family members and friends only. Some topics of discussion may not be suitable for small children or pre-teens. Attend a support group and network with family members who have “been there”.

Some of these support groups meet via zoom and some meet in person. Please reach out with the contact information given below as you are planning to attend, or if you have any questions. There is no limit to which of or how often you attend a support group, nor is there a location requirement, if you are interested in attending a support group, we welcome you to do so.

Each meeting offers different insights and valuable information, and you are not required to share anything at all, if you do not wish to, simply listen and learn from other attendees.

**Portland East Side Support Group**

Varies & flexible – please call if interested.

Please call Ray at (530) 635-2763

[RayAllenFox@gmail.com](mailto:RayAllenFox@gmail.com)

**Eugene Support Groups**

1<sup>st</sup> Thursdays: 6:30pm-8:30pm

Please call to confirm location.

Dave (541) 344-7612 or Don (541) 521-2231

**Zoom Support Group**

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesdays: 7pm-8:30pm

Please email for Zoom link prior to meeting.

[oregoncure@gmail.com](mailto:oregoncure@gmail.com) or [admin@oregoncure.com](mailto:admin@oregoncure.com)

**Salem Support Group**

1<sup>st</sup> Saturdays: 9:30am-11:30am

The Keizer Senior Center

930 Plymouth Drive NE, Keizer, OR 97303

Wayne (971) 432-0148