

Special Coverage – Prisons during the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the Pandemic, CILS offices have received letters or calls from inmates or family members of inmates expressing concern about the safety of an inmate during the COVID-19 pandemic. The PrisonPolicy.org is tracking state responses to COVID-19 and noted the following for California (<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/virus/virusresponse.html>):

- On April 6th, the California Judicial Council adopted a statewide emergency bail schedule that set bail at \$0 for most misdemeanors and some low-level felony offenses. While the emergency bail schedule was rescinded in June, 31 Counties opted to keep the bail schedule in place. <https://tinyurl.com/y6qkraql>.
- In June, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) announced that they would be releasing persons serving sentences for “non-violent” offenses and with less than 180 days left on their sentence (who are eligible for supervised release) beginning July 1st <https://tinyurl.com/yysm3v5e>. Then in July, CDCR announced that 8,000 people were to be released by the end of August which included persons scheduled to be released and medically vulnerable. <https://tinyurl.com/yy5xtl5j>.
- Since the start of the Pandemic, California Department of Adult Parole Operations has reduced the number of required check-ins to protect staff and the supervised population by suspending office visits for people 65 years and older and those with chronic medical conditions. <https://tinyurl.com/y2d5efe9>.
- In April, CDCR provided free calls on three days per week. Currently, the department is now only offering two “free calling days” per month. <https://tinyurl.com/y4qocmc4>.
- On September 11, Governor Newsom signed AB 2147 that will accelerate the process to expunge the felony records of formerly incarcerated inmates to serve as volunteer firefighters. The bill can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/y3x274wo>.

Despite these efforts and progress, there have been instances where inmates were not released in a timely manner. In the news, a man died in custody despite receiving an early release. In this case, the family of the man who died due to COVID-19 filed the first claim against California Corrections. <https://tinyurl.com/y3nwzvsy>. Per the news article, the claim was brought on behalf one of the 26 prisoners/staff who have died from COVID-19 at the San Quentin prison facility. Despite California’s efforts, only a modest decrease in the prison population has been reported, with approximately 11% drop from January to July. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2020/08/05/jails-vs-prisons-update-2/>. Per PrisonPolicy.org, most of the reductions in prison populations were because states didn’t admit people from county jails. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2020/05/14/jails-vs-prison-update/>.

If you know of a prisoner whose release has been delayed, the Prisoner Advocacy Network has a useful guide for the appeal process. The guide for a 602 and 602HC appeal can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/y6pmzcf6>. Information about expedited releases can be found at: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/covid19/expedited-releases/>.

In this Issue:

- Info for Prisoners During COVID-19
- Treasury Reporting Deadlines

Reminder Coronavirus Relief Fund Reporting for March 1 – June 30, 2020 due SEPTEMBER 21!

Some tribes may have difficulty meeting the deadline and as a prime recipient, a tribe may seek a 30-day extension by submitting an extension request to Treasury OIG at CARES@oig.treas.gov.

Extension decisions will be made on case-by-case basis. The Treasury FAQ and Guidance can be found at these links:

Guidance: <https://tinyurl.com/y2ojpe6m>

FAQ: <https://tinyurl.com/y2oktulz>

TRIBAL COVID-19 RESOURCES

For updates on COVID-19 and Resources for Tribal Communities see the following links:

State of California:

A one-stop page collecting information related to COVID-19 can be located at:
<https://covid19.ca.gov/>.

CDSS Tribal Affairs: COVID-19 resources for California tribal communities:
<https://tinyurl.com/y3cjsopy>.

Federal Resources:

A one-stop page for Federal COVID-19 information:
<https://www.coronavirus.gov/>.

Indian Health Service:
<https://www.ihs.gov/coronavirus/>.

Health and Human Services:
<https://www.hhs.gov/coronavirus/index.html>.

Centers for Disease Control: Providing information on how to protect yourself and what to do if you are sick. Also contains the most update-to-date information on the virus and medical news related to the virus: <https://tinyurl.com/rrro9sx>.

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response:
<https://tinyurl.com/yvos6b28>.

Bureau of Indian Affairs: Includes resources for tribal governments when responding to COVID-19:
<https://www.bia.gov/coronavirus>.

Treasury: For more information on CARES Act funding and distributions.
<https://tinyurl.com/qsnh97g>.

Tribal Specific Webpages with Daily Updates

National Congress of American Indians (NCAI): <http://www.ncai.org/covid-19>.

Tribal Law and Policy Institute (TPLI):
<https://www.home.tlpi.org/covid-19>.

National Indigenous Women's Resource Center (NIWRC) :
<https://tinyurl.com/yyfdhxw2>.

National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA): <https://www.nicwa.org/coronavirus/>

National Indian Health Board (NIHB):
<https://www.nihb.org/covid-19/>

Turtletalk: <https://turtletalk.blog/covid-19-tribal-documents/> and <https://turtletalk.blog/tag/covid-19/>.

Native American Financial Officers' Association (NAFOA): <https://tinyurl.com/yyavoevy>.