



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
P.O. Box 41100 • Olympia, Washington 98504-1100

February 25, 2022

Dear Families,

I hope this letter finds you well. Because of declining cases of COVID-19, this week I have some good news to share. We are able to reopen visitation for facilities no longer on ‘facility wide outbreak’ status. As of today, three prison facilities will resume visitation beginning this weekend: Clallam Bay Corrections Center, Cedar Creek Corrections Center and Olympic Corrections Center. All work release facilities except for Bellingham and Progress House may also resume visitation. These facilities with open visitation will also restore recreation, in-person programming and other key activities. We will continue to post the visitation status for each facility on the DOC website as more facilities open visitation.

If you have a family member, loved one, or friend in a facility that continues under a facility wide outbreak we will not be able to open those. Extended Family Visits (EFV’s) are unable to resume just yet, but we will re-evaluate this on March 13. Please check the [facility alerts pages](#) and the [visiting webpage](#) for information on scheduling visits, and COVID-19 visitation rules.

Medical isolation and quarantine can take a toll on a person’s mental health. In addition to our normal process to request a mental health appointment, our mental health staff are on site in all major prison facilities making rounds at least twice a week to check on those socially isolated by quarantine. Crisis appointments are also available at major facilities. These resources are important until isolation and quarantine can be lifted—hopefully soon.

The comfort items and communications discounts continue to be available from the [Incarcerated Individual Betterment Fund \(IIBF\)](#). Store credits will be implemented in March. Supply chain issues continue to impact deliveries of other items, but many are in progress. Televisions on loan to those in isolation are being shipped to facilities in the week ahead.

I know that some of you had questions about the department’s use of federal Coronavirus Relief (CARES Act) funds. Between March 1, 2020, and January 31, 2022, DOC has received \$79 million in funding from multiple federal sources for COVID-19 related costs and has incurred nearly \$88 million in expenses. The agency expects to experience up to \$30 million in additional expenses between February 1, 2022, and June 30, 2022. We anticipate that the Legislature will fully fund all remaining costs with additional federal funding in the final approved budget expected no later than March 10th of this year.

Federal rules place strict limitations on how DOC can spend Coronavirus Relief (CARES Act) funding. Examples of eligible expenses includes equipment and supplies, staff positions and overtime costs, and other response resources directly associated with our coronavirus emergency response.

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DOC has used these federal funds to increase medical and other staffing levels to provide expanded medical care, COVID screening stations and testing expenses, purchasing temporary medical and living units, and other related activities. The increased number of living units added needed space to allow for social distancing and for those in medical isolation or in quarantine. New medical units, to include rapid deployment hospital tent systems, provided the needed medical beds to care for individuals sick with COVID. Funding was also used to pay for equipment and supplies, staff overtime, leave, and travel expenses, increased laundry, food, and vendor costs, and to modify visit rooms with plexiglass so that they could be reopened sooner.

In addition, DOC received a \$240 million allocation of federal Coronavirus Response Funds (CRF) for salary benefit expenses incurred between July 1, 2021, and December 31, 2021, for our public safety and health employees whose services are presumed to be substantially dedicated to responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency. This was not an increase in our base funding, as it just restored a \$240 million reduction of our General Fund-State funding to reflect the savings achieved through the use of CRF funds.

Lastly, we continue our work on increasing the frequency and scope of our communications to families. To relieve the burden of outreach for Statewide and Local Family Council volunteers, and to improve our ability to communicate directly with as many families as possible, we are building distribution lists for each prison facility so families can receive direct information and updates from the facility where their loved one resides. We continue to encourage you to be involved with those groups.

I am optimistic more facilities will be able to reopen visitation in the days ahead as cases of COVID decline, to enable you to resume visits with loved ones that are so important to their health and success. Thank you for your continued support of those under our custody and care.

Fondly,

Cheryl Strange, Secretary
Department of Corrections