

CITIZENS FOR PRISON REFORM

Table of Contents: CPR Resource Guide

Introduction and Welcome	1
General Information	2
Addresses and Phone Numbers of MDOC Facilities	2
Online MDOC Resident Search	2
Administrative Assistant Information	2
MDOC Family Informational Packet	3
Policies Relating to Newly Incarcerated Persons	3
First Stop: Reception and Guidance Centers	3
Orientation	3
Treatment Policy	3
Incarcerated Person Guidebook	4
Release of Information	4
Incarcerated Persons Services	4
Phone Services	4
Sending Items to Incarcerated Persons	5
Sending Money	5
Sending Books or Magazines	5
Friends and Family Pack Program	6
	1

	2
Sending a JPay Email	6
Sending Mail Inside	7
NIXLE	7
Visitation	8
Visitation Guidelines	8
What to Expect During a Visit	8
Vending Machines	8
Comment Cards	8
Grievances	8
Filing a grievance	8
Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests	9
Sample FOIA Form	9
Ombudsman’s Office	10
Disciplinary Proceedings	10
Parole	11
Medical Health Services	11
General Health Care	11
Bureau of Health—Central Office Communication	12
Mental Health Services	12
Recipient Rights Specialists	12
Segregation Policy	12

	3
Durable Power of Attorney Information	12
Additional Information	13
MDOC Family Advisory Board	13
Advocacy Organizations	13
MDOC Frequently Asked Questions	14
Legal Assistance	14
Legislators	14
How to contact Citizens for Prison Reform (CPR)	14
Disclaimer	15
Glossary of Terms	15

Introduction and Welcome

Thank you for accessing our resource guide!

We are Citizens for Prison Reform and hope to assist you on your journey with a loved one inside the MDOC.

We can help you overcome the stigma and become a better advocate for your loved one in the correctional facility system, whether you feel alone or unsure. This guide contains information, links, and resources to help you support yourself and your loved one.

Our virtual monthly meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month via Zoom. Please check out [our website](#) for updated meeting information.

Please email us at info@micpr.org or leave a message on our message line at 269-339-0606 with questions or comments. You may also sign up to receive monthly meeting information on our website's home page. This document contains hyperlinks that will take you to essential forms and documents.

As Helen Keller once said, **“Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much.”**

In addition, Martin Luther King Jr. said, **“Our lives begin to the end the day we become silent about the things that matter.”**

General Information

The Michigan Department of Corrections is the state government's branch responsible for managing and administering Michigan Correctional Facilities. In nearly every possible administration area, a policy directive describes the department's official policy regarding a problem you may be encountering. Policy directives are available online [here](#).

The addresses and phone numbers of MDOC facilities are provided.

You can reach the MDOC at (517) 335-1426.

Their address is:

Department of Corrections
Grandview Plaza Building
PO Box 30003, 206 East Michigan Ave.
Lansing, MI 48909

Upon Entry to the MDOC:

Someone outside should keep the incarcerated person's essential documents in a safe place. This includes their pre-sentence investigation report, photo ID, birth certificate, passport, work history, or anything else relevant for a possible parole hearing or community re-entry.

For specific MDOC policies, use [this link](#) to search for particular directives.

For a list of all correctional facilities, addresses, and phone numbers, use [this link](#).

Online MDOC Search

Please visit [this link](#) if you need to be informed of an incarcerated persons location or require information on transfers (usually updated within 48 hours).

Use [this link](#) to find the phone numbers and e-mail addresses for MDOC or other State of Michigan employees. You can find a complete pdf list of MDOC staff (as of March 2025) [here](#).

Please note that you need to know at least the first letter of a staff member's first and last name to conduct a proper search. The more information you can input, the narrower the search, making it more accessible.

It's also possible that the list only includes some employees. Emailing questions and brief concerns rather than phone calls has advantages and can be easier for the staff. Remember to be polite, stick to facts, and ask questions about your loved one's care.

Administrative Assistant Information

The Administrative Assistant (AA) is the point of contact for families. We recommend that families start by contacting the AA if you have any questions or concerns. You can find a list of the AA's (as of March 2025) by facility [here](#).

If a member of the public doesn't feel like they are receiving an adequate or appropriate response from a facility, they can contact the Assistant Deputy Director (ADD) for the region.

There are two Assistant Deputy Directors that oversee the prisons.

Jackson Region – Shawn Brewer – Office - 517-780-6053, BrewerS1@michigan.gov

All Jackson and Ionia facilities, Macomb, Women's Huron Valley, Woodland, Lakeland, Thumb, and Gus Harrison.

Kinross Region – Cindy Dodds-Duggan – Office 906-495-5045, Dodds-DuganC@michigan.gov

All Upper Peninsula facilities, Carson City, Central Michigan, St. Louis, Oaks, Brooks, Muskegon, and Saginaw.

If you call the facility for any reason, always record the name of the person you spoke with on the phone. Creating a log book is helpful—record conversations, moves, and any significant incidents. When in person, note the name tag information.

MDOC Family Informational Packet

The Michigan Department of Corrections has created a family informational packet on its [website](#).

Policies Relating to Newly Incarcerated Persons

[Policy Directive 04.01 General Provisions](#)

Reception and Guidance Centers

All incarcerated persons sentenced to prison are first taken to a receiving area, or "Reception and Guidance Center" (RGC), where they are tested, evaluated, and classified according to the institution to which they will eventually be sent. The receiving process usually takes about ten days. Despite this, persons often stay in reception units for an additional three to five weeks as they await assignment to a specific facility.

There are two reception areas in the Michigan Correctional system. The Charles Egeler Reception and Guidance Center, is where men over 17 and men that violate parole are sent. Marquette Branch Prison will receive men sentenced in the U.P. and promptly transfer them to the appropriate reception facility. The Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility accepts women. Please click [here](#) for more information on the Reception and Guidance Center Policy.

Orientation

Incarcerated persons shall receive an orientation upon arrival at a correctional facility. The Administration (CFA) facility operates according to an MDOC Policy Directive. All incarcerated persons must receive orientation within a week of their arrival at the facility, unless they are unavailable due to circumstances such as being out on writ or hospitalized; in these cases, they must receive the orientation as soon as they become available. The policy directive outlines the content of an orientation and stipulates that it must be specific to the person's segregation unit or security level.

For more information, please view the policy directive 04.01.140 [here](#).

Treatment Policy

Standards exist for the humane treatment of individuals and for providing decent living conditions. This Policy Directive on Humane Treatment, PD 03.03.130, is [here](#).

Incarcerated Persons Guidebook

[Policy Directive 04.01.130](#)

The Correctional Facilities Administration (CFA) is to provide each person in the general population, protective segregation, or a reception facility with a “Prisoner Guidebook” containing information regarding Department policies and institutional procedures. Most facilities have outdated guidebooks due to the cost of paper and ever-changing policy directives and operating procedures. In the prison library, all facilities have posted rules and a Master Guide to Operating Procedures.

Release of Information

Upon entry into MDOC and movement to a new facility, incarcerated persons should request to sign a **“Release of Information”** form, which will give the individual they appoint the right to obtain their medical and mental health condition. This would be done by medical or mental health staff, who would submit a kite (request) for such. These forms are valid for one year and go from facility to facility. Individuals can request the forms from medical. You can download the form from the family information packet on the MDOC website [here](#) and [here](#).

We highly recommend that as a primary advocate, you ask your loved one to sign and submit the **(CHJ-718) Verbal Medical Release Form**. This form allows **verbal communication** between you and the MDOC and Healthcare. It will allow them to discuss your loved ones medical or mental health issues. This also enables you to act as an advocate.

In order to receive **written releases of information** or records your loved one must complete a **separate form** called the **(CHJ-121) Written Medical Release Form**.

Having authorization and access to this information can be very helpful for families, and allows them to better advocate when any serious issues arise.

*We also suggest you ask your loved one to add you as an **emergency contact**.*

Once you are authorized to receive information about your loved ones medical and mental health care. You can share concerns for your loved ones well-being, you can communicate directly with the MDOC's Bureau of Health, respectfully share your concerns, ask about their diagnosis, medication, treatment plan and advocate for your loved one's mental health or medical treatment.

Incarcerated Persons Services

Phone Services

[Policy Directive 05.03.13](#)

Connect Network GTL can set up phone service at 800-483-8314. Incarcerated persons can purchase phone time on a prepaid debit PIN system, call collect (if a phone service allows this), or individuals can set up a prepaid account with a credit card [here](#) or by calling (855) 466-2832.

Sending items to incarcerated persons

Policy Directive 04.02.130

Incarcerated persons must purchase approved property through the “prisoner store” using their “trust fund”. To view the “prisoner store's policy”, please [click here](#).

Sending Money

GTL Financial Services sends money to incarcerated persons. GTL Financial Services will process all deposits from family and public members. Money orders must be made payable to GTL Financial Services and sent to the lockbox address below. Include a deposit form in the money order, and mail it to the following address:

GTL Financial Services
5700 SW 34th St., Suite 1315
Gainesville, FL 32608
Customer Service: 877-650-4249

There will be no processing fee for funds sent to the GTL lockbox. However, for online , a processing fee applies. GTL will dispose of any notes or letters included in the mailing. Deposits may not exceed \$300.00 in value, and all money orders must be issued in US dollars.

Deposit forms are available at each correctional facility, as well as online.
Please contact GTL at 877-650-4249 with any questions about processing money orders.

GTL will accept deposits into an incarcerated persons account electronically, either [here](#) or over the phone. Fees apply to both of these transaction types. The GTL website has more information about the current rates and delivery times.

All funds received must comply with PD 04.02.105 [Prisoner Funds and Director's Office Memorandum 2017-18](#).

The Michigan Department of Treasury has the authority to collect the deposited funds. The Michigan Department of Corrections, or the sentencing court, imposes obligations through applicable departmental policies.

Sending books or magazines

Policy Directive (05.03.118)

Publishers or approved vendors listed below can send books directly. Public members may purchase allowable books, magazines, and other publications, provided they are new, unused, and sent directly from an approved internet vendor. It must state that it is new to the vendor or publisher. We do not allow used books or items. A private individual cannot sell or mail the publication to individuals. It is important to note that you cannot purchase books from the store or ship directly to a local store. Choose to include a gift receipt when ordering from Amazon. You may also send your loved one a photo of the gift receipt of a book purchased.

Approved internet vendors include:

- Amazon.com
- BarnesandNoble.com
- EdwardRHamilton.com
- Prisonlegalnews.org
- SchulerBooks.com
- Walmart.com
- Visually Impaired -- [American Printing House for the Blind](#)

For MDOC policy on book or magazine rejections, please visit [this link](#).

Friends and Family Pack Program

Policy Directive 04.02.135

The FFP Program is a department-approved customized package program that allows family members and others to send authorized items to incarcerated persons while safeguarding against contraband introduction. Persons in the facility's general population may also place orders for their personal use via institutional ordering procedures. A vendor kiosk identifying items for purchase through the FFP Program is available to persons in each general population housing unit and other areas of the institution.

There is a limit of \$125 per FFP order placed, not including tax and shipping. For incarcerated persons, this is in addition to the \$125? biweekly limit on purchasing Standardized Store List items from the "prisoner store". They may place only one FFP order per quarter (i.e., Jan-Mar; Apr-Jun; Jul-Sep; Oct-Dec). Only the first order placed by or for them will be processed each quarter, regardless of who put it or its value.

Incarcerated persons are prohibited from accepting FFP orders that another incarcerated person, person on parole, or probation is known to have purchased. The law also prohibits them from accepting FFP orders purchased by a family member of another incarcerated person, person on parole, or probation unless the purchaser is also a family member of the incarcerated person receiving the item. A "family member" is defined as a grandparent, parent, stepparent, spouse, mother-in-law, father-in-law, child, stepchild, grandchild, sibling, stepbrother, and stepsister; an aunt and uncle are also considered family members if there is adequate verification that the aunt and uncle served as a surrogate parent of the incarcerated person. Violations of these rules could result in a restriction on FFP privileges.

Persons in segregation are not eligible to receive FFP orders. If you order for them, the vendor will return it instead of delivering it. For this reason, an order returned will not count toward the quarterly limit. Orders received for persons temporarily outside of an MDOC due to a court writ will have their order returned after five days. The order will not count against their quarterly limit.

For additional information about this program, click [here](#) or visit the [FFP website](#).

Sending a JPay Email

Director's Office Memorandum 2018–2022.1

JPAY's [website](#) allows you to send emails. This service requires an account and costs money. Individuals can also use this service to send responses for a fee.

Please note: They can only respond to someone who has sent them a message through JPAY. Not all facilities allow those with a loss of privilege to receive JPAY mail.

For more information on MDOC's policy regarding electronic communication, click [here](#).

Sending Mail Inside

Policy Directive (05.03.118)

“Prisoner mail” refers to any written, typed, or printed information communication. It becomes prohibited if the mail threatens the facility's security, good order, or discipline; encourages or facilitates criminal activity; or hinders their rehabilitation. For detailed information about prohibited mail, see MDOC [PD 05.03.118](#).

When writing to them using the US Postal Service, the envelope must include the address of the facility where they are located, the incarcerated person's name, and the MDOC six digit number. You can search the OTIS database [here](#) if you don't have this information.

For example:

John A. Smith, #123456
Michigan Correctional Facility
123 Prison Street
Anytown, MI 48909

Director's Office Memorandum 2021-28R also states the [following](#). Policy states no more than 12 pages, single-sided per letter.

NIXLE

On this website, you can sign up to receive MDOC alerts for a specific facility. This can be useful for learning about canceled visits or other important information. Select your loved one's facility from the list, scroll to the bottom, and sign up for Nixle.

Visitation

Policy Directive 05.03.140

Incarcerated people must complete a Visitor List, identifying immediate family members and only ten other visitors. All persons on the incarcerated persons list must then complete the visiting application. Before sending an application, an incarcerated person must submit their visitor list; otherwise, they will deny the application and require a resubmission. To visit the incarcerated person, complete this application and return it to the facility for approval.

To view the visitation policy of the MDOC website, refer to [this link](#).

If you are dealing with a sick individual or wish for an incarcerated loved one to attend an immediate family member's funeral, please refer to MDOC Policy [here](#).

Visitation Guidelines

Please print and review the [Visiting Standards Document](#) for important rules and regulations regarding days and times, dress codes, holiday visits, etc. They strictly enforce dress codes, so please review the policy carefully.

Visitors can schedule visitations [here](#). You can choose in-person or a video call. Video calls are twenty minutes long and cost \$3.20. Make sure you do not make a GTL account until you are an approved visitor.

What to Expect During a Visit

Please note: Each facility may set its visiting standards. Before making a trip to the facility, we strongly advise you to call each facility to ascertain their visiting restrictions and confirm if your loved one is eligible for a visit. Inquire about the limits, as they differ amongst facilities and the MDOC Visiting Standards document does not list them all.

Vending Machines

Find out what is required to buy food from the vending machines; frequently, you must purchase a card with a \$5.00 bill (\$10 with a credit or debit card) and then load it with larger bills, up to \$30. Make sure to bring a mix of bills due to the limit. Refunds are possible through the vendor.

An outside contracted company, not MDOC, controls the vending machines and their supplies. It is not the same company across the entire state.

If you lose money at the facility's vending machines, there is a business size card to take with you. You can use the information on the card to request a refund. Point out other issues, such as a lack of supplies or condiments to the vending company, as well. You can also report any issues with the vending to MDOC-VistingConcerns@michigan.gov.

Comment Cards

You can fill out comment postcards. They are in the waiting area by the front desk. You can compliment staff or express your concerns. Once you leave the facility, you can drop them off in a mailbox, postage-paid. You may remain anonymous. If the officer isn't present, you can ask for one at the front desk.

Grievances

Policy Directive 03.02.130

An incarcerated person should first follow the chain of command and the steps to communicate the issue: file a request (Kite) form, then attempt to resolve all the problems with various staff before filing a grievance. It is often possible to accomplish this.

Filing a grievance

We must provide incarcerated people and parolees with an effective method of seeking redress for alleged policy and procedure violations or unsatisfactory conditions of confinement.

The policy directive below states that incarcerated people can only exhaust their administrative remedies if they file a grievance through all three steps of the grievance process. This includes any complaints they make about grievable matters.

The Family Advisory Board created this simple grievance explanation chart. For a more complex grievance explanation and instructions, please see the MDOC Grievance Procedure Document [here](#). Email: MDOC-Families@michigan.gov You can also find the information on grievances in the MDOC Family Information Packet [here](#).

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests

A copy of a Central Office file or records on people can be requested by anyone who:

- Is currently under the supervision of the MDOC.
- For the past five years, have been under the supervision of the MDOC.

There will be a fee for processing these records. The central office receives certain records, including hearing packets, misconduct reports, and critical incident reports. You would need to complete a FOIA request document to obtain those records.

Other records will be at the facility where the person is currently located. These would be mental health or medical health records. You must use a specific form to obtain these records. If you don't have legal guardianship, you must send this form to the individual for completion.

Please keep in mind that your loved one may need to write permission to release FOIA records in addition to signing the medical/mental health records form. Documents granting access to their records may include guardianship documentation, a court power of attorney, or any other legal standing document.

Here is a template FOIA and sample documents you might request before a parole hearing or to gather information.

Sample FOIA Template

Here is an example of how to fill out a FOIA form: You should try to be specific with the type of information you are requesting, and include dates:

Your address

Please provide your city, state, and zip code.

Date

FOIA Coordinator

Address of Institution OR Michigan Department of Corrections
City/State/Zip OR PO Box 30003 Lansing, MI 48909

Dear FOIA Coordinator:

Under the Michigan Freedom of Information Act, MCLA 15.231 et. seq., I am requesting copies of the following records:

This critical incident report describes an incident involving John Doe 111111 and Rudy Roe 222222 that occurred on March 22, 2007, at approximately 10:30 a.m. at the Muskegon Correctional Facility.

Please contact me with the cost of processing the above request and forward the records to my address.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Name

You can send a request to the FOIA Coordinator at the central office or email to
MDOC-FOIA@michigan.gov
Michigan Department of Corrections
PO Box 30003
Lansing, MI 48909

Ombudsman's Office

Policy Directive 03.02.135

You can contact this agency if you have concerns about a specific individual or an institution's general policy. The Ombudsman is a legislative oversight body reporting to the Department of Corrections legislative body. The office may conduct investigations and work to resolve issues within the department.

Learn more about this agency [here](#). You can also reach them at (517) 373-8573 or via Ombudsman@legislature.mi.gov. You can also view MDOC's policy on the Ombudsman's office [here](#).

Disciplinary Proceedings

Policy Directive 03.03.105

Incarcerated People who violate rules may face disciplinary sanctions. A person who receives a misconduct ticket has the right to attend the misconduct hearing. Attachments A, B, and C of this policy provide a detailed breakdown of any suspected written rule violations. These show whether the misconduct is Class I, II, or III. Only the violations identified in these attachments warrant writing misconduct reports.

For the detailed policy on disciplinary proceedings, please view [this link](#).

Parole

The policy directives are 6.06.100, 6.06.103, and 6.06.105.

You can find information on the parole, commutation, and pardon processes [MDOC's website](#). Families should educate themselves about the parole process and parole board members 7 months before a loved one's parole hearing.

A family member or advocate may participate in the parole hearing process with their loved one. Please read the policy to learn who may or may not participate and the current process.

A loved one on the outside should put together a parole packet. This should contain a primary letter from the person who will provide housing, financial, and emotional support. Additional letters from a possible employer, friend, neighbor, and mentor are possibilities to consider. We recommend sending home copies of all programs and classes the individual attends, whether required or not, and including these in the parole packet. They may consist of a letter.

Use the above template FOIA and sample documents you might request before a parole hearing or to gather information.

If possible, we recommend mailing the packet in one envelope to the parole board office 7 months in advance. You can fax and call to confirm receipt. Be considerate of their time.

Parole Board Office
Grandview Plaza,
P.O. Box 30003
Lansing, MI 48909

Phone number: 517-373-0270
Fax number: 517-335-0039

CPR created a webinar to help families understand and prepare for the parole process. The webinar can be found [here](#). American Friends prepared a helpful booklet that describes the parole process. These resources provide information on how individuals and families can prepare for the parole interview.

For assistance with reentry, please use [SADO's Reentry Services Locator](#).

Medical Health Services

General Health Care

Policy Directive 04.06

Incarcerated People care services are provided using a standard of medically necessary care based on court decisions, legislation, accepted correctional and health care standards, and MDOC policies and procedures. More information can be found [here](#).

Because health information is confidential, your loved one must complete and sign a Release of Information Release Form. Please see under “Release of Information” for forms. This is necessary to facilitate direct communication with those responsible for your loved one's mental and medical health care. HIPPA laws prohibit custody from disclosing information about a loved one's medical or mental health condition without a signed form.

Bureau of Health—Central Office Communication

The Bureau of Health is located at the Central Office in Lansing. If you believe the facility level is not addressing your medical or mental health concerns, contact them at (517) 373-3629 or via email at MDOCQAO-communications@michigan.gov. When sending information, please make sure to include your loved ones' full name and number.

Mental Health Services

Policy Directive 04.06.180

The Department of Corrections (DOC) provides facility-based mental health services to individuals with mental or behavioral disorders who are housed in reception centers, general populations, or segregation units. Psychological Services Units (PSU's), located at each facility, are also operated by the MDOC's Bureau of Health (information located [here](#)).

For more detailed information on mental health policies, visit [here](#) and [here](#).

Recipient Rights Specialists

Every person who is diagnosed with a mental illness has rights. View and print the Mental [Mental Health Rights Booklet](#) and the [Mental Health Guidebook](#). You can also view more information about Recipient Rights [online](#).

Michigan Department of Corrections - Bureau of Health Care Services

Attention: Sara Heydens, Corrections Mental Rights Specialist

Mental Health Services

1835 Treanor Street

Saginaw, MI 48601

Email: HeydensS@michigan.gov

Segregation Policy

MDOC's policy on mental illness segregation is [here](#); more details on these particular services are available [here](#). The MDOC's information on mental health treatment can be accessed [here](#).

Durable Power of Attorney Information

Policy Directive 03.04.107

The Advanced Directives for Health Care Policy can be found [here](#).

Before calling the facility to arrange for the signing and witnessing of these documents, we recommend you send in the MDOC Durable Power of Attorney Designation Form and the MDOC Acceptance as a Prisoner Advocate Form for your loved one to review and discuss. Make sure you leave with a copy.

We recommend you mail a copy to the MDOC Central Office for their records and return it to the unit and the facility's Warden. These forms are exclusive to the Department of Corrections.

Additional Information

Visit these websites to see the [Michigan Compiled Laws](#), [Administrative Rules](#), and [SOAHR Rules](#). Also, visit [this website](#) for information on county jails.

MDOC Family Advisory Board

The Family Advisory Board (FAB) was established through Citizens for Prison Reform and is currently managed by Citizens for Prison Reform. This board was established in 2015 to bring families and those with incarcerated loved ones to the table with the Michigan Department of Corrections to address general concerns, longstanding and current, and to offer solutions that address greater family support and connectedness. After the passage of SB 195 in 2020 the Michigan Department of Corrections implemented the official board in 2022. The FAB now holds public hearings that families are welcome to attend twice a year. [MDOC Family Advisory Board Information](#)

You can email your concerns regarding family reunification to MDOC-Families@michigan.gov If you have any complaints or concerns during a visitation with your loved one, please email MDOC-VisitingConcerns@michigan.gov

Advocacy Organizations

The [American Friends Service Committee \(AFSC\)](#) serves the Michigan Criminal Justice Program of the American Friends Service Committee. Their work is based on an advocacy and community organizing model. They assist incarcerated people and their loved ones with problems and provide them with tools to help them become strong advocates for themselves. The group produces a booklet that provides essential information on advocating for your loved ones .

[Safe and Just Michigan](#), a non-profit public policy organization, is concerned about Michigan's excessive use of punitive strategies rather than preventive ones to deal with crime and its impact on our quality of life. It informs policymakers, advocacy groups, affected communities, and the general public about these issues through numerous means, including a website, a newsletter, research reports, legislative testimony, and speaking appearances. People inside can receive a newsletter.

[Humanity for Prisoners](#) provides hands-on, one-on-one advocacy for individuals dealing with health issues, death and dying, mental health, parole, and commutation. The organization exclusively concentrates on cases within the boundaries of the State of Michigan.

The [Michigan Center for Youth Justice](#) works with Michigan's citizens and leaders to develop a comprehensive strategy addressing juvenile justice initiatives in Michigan. The MCYJ is primarily involved in policy change through legislation.

[Michigan Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants \(MI-CURE\)](#) is a grassroots organization that became a national organization in 1985. We believe that facilities should only be used for those who absolutely must be incarcerated, and those who are incarcerated should have all of the resources they need to turn their lives around. People inside can receive a newsletter. .
PO Box 2736, Kalamazoo, MI, 49003-2736

Other useful documents are available on the resource tab of [CPR's website](#).

MDOC Frequently Asked Questions

The MDOC website features a [FAQ](#) (Frequently Asked Questions), providing answers to numerous questions. The primary corrections page is located [here](#).

Legal Assistance

If you'd like a legal consultation on individuals rights or your case, the following organizations may be helpful:

[Disability Rights Michigan](#) (517) 487-1755

[Michigan State University College of Law Civil Rights Clinic](#) (517) 432-6880

[University of Michigan Law Clinic](#) (734) 764-1358

[Cooley Law School Clinic](#) (517) 371-5140

[Michigan State Appellate Defender Office](#) (517) 334-6069

[The American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan](#) (517) 484-3176 or (313) 578-6800

Legislators

Legislators can be helpful in seeking information regarding the corrections system. They are also crucial to bringing forward change in MDOC policy.

- Find your [State Representative](#)
- Find your [State Senator](#)

How to Contact Citizens for Prison Reform (CPR)

Our Mission: CPR is a grass-roots, family-led initiative that engages, educates, and empowers those affected by crime and punishment to advance their constitutional, civil, and human rights.

The group seeks to provide accurate information that will encourage the education of our fellow citizens, communities, and elected officials.

The organization believes that effective accountability will promote safer facilities, a safer public, and economical cost savings.

We hold monthly loved ones' meetings online via Zoom on the third Wednesday of the month. Please register [here](#) to be able to attend. Check our website for other meeting information.

Contact Us:

P.O. Box 80414
Lansing, MI 48908

Telephone: (269) 339-0606

Email: info@micpr.org

Website: <http://www.micpr.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MICitizensforPrisonReform/>

Disclaimer

Members of Michigan Citizens for Prison Reform produced this handbook as a guide for families, friends, and advocates unfamiliar with the Michigan correctional system. The Michigan Department of Corrections' website and other credible sources provided all the information. We also gathered information from the perspectives and experiences of several Michigan Citizens for Prison Reform members with loved ones in the system. The organization takes no responsibility for missing, incomplete, or inaccurate information.

Glossary of Terms

AA Administrative Assistant: Warden's administrative assistant. They are your main point of contact for any questions or concerns you may have.

ADW Assistant Deputy Warden: There are generally multiple ADWs at each facility, each assigned to either security, programs, or housing. The ADWs serve as supervisors to the RUMs.

AOT/AOP Assaultive Offender Therapy/Program: This program aims to assist individuals who have a history of assaultive behavior and/or frequently exhibit poor judgment. This therapy is often part of the R&GC recommendations and may be required by the parole board.

ARUS Assistant Resident Unit Supervisor: The ARUS is an assistant supervisor within a housing unit. She or he is the person who completes most of an individual's paperwork and is the primary contact for facility administrative issues. She or he is generally in the early stages of an administration career within the MDOC. The ARUS should be able to answer questions and help to resolve problems.

BLOCK REPRESENTATIVE: An incarcerated person elected by the majority of the incarcerated population within a housing unit to serve on the Warden's Forum. Responsible for addressing concerns affecting people who are incarcerated. For each housing unit, there is a black and white representation.

BOOT CAMP: This is a 90-day paramilitary program for young non-violent offenders. Participants perform strenuous physical labor and exercise. Facility usually awaits those who cannot complete the program.. We refer to it as SAI, or Special Alternative Incarceration.

BUSINESS OFFICE: The office in each facility that handles incarcerated people's mail, records, and other paperwork related to each facility.

CALL OUT/PASS/ITINERARY/DETAIL: Document given to incarcerated people detailing any required activity or movement, such as a medical appointment.

CENTRAL OFFICE: The office in Lansing that is the location of the leadership and administration of the Michigan Department of Corrections Leadership and administration office in Lansing.

CO/CORRECTIONS OFFICER: This is the starting position in the hierarchy of custody and security staff.

COMMUNITY CENTER: A residential program operated by the MDOC or contracted with the MDOC. Located in cities throughout the state, they serve as transitional housing for persons leaving prison.

CONTINUANCE: See Flop.

CONTRABAND: Any item not allowed into the facility per policy and procedure. Illegal contraband refers to items that are illegal even outside the facility, such as marijuana. Legal contraband would include rope, which could be used in an escape.

CUSTOMS STAFF: The staff in control of safety and security, including all corrections officers, sergeants, lieutenants, captains, or shift commanders, as well as RUMs and ARUSs. Custody does not include the mailroom, record office, school, or mental and medical health staff.

DEPUTY WARDEN: Second in chain of command to the Warden.

DETENTION: An incarcerated person may receive a sentence of segregation if found guilty of serious misconduct. It is a cage within a facility.

DIRECTOR: the head of the entire Department of Corrections. He or she is appointed by the Governor.

Incarcerated people use the **DISBURSEMENT FORM** to pay for various items they order from the store or approved vendors. The person's account receives the money.

Early Release Date (ERD) represents the earliest possible release date for an individual on parole from a facility. It is the minimum sentence minus any disciplinary credits earned. People sentenced to prison after December 15, 2000, no longer receive any credits and must at least serve the minimum sentence imposed by the court.

FLOP refers to the Parole Board's decision to deny release to an individual who has reached the earliest release date or the end of a previous flop. Also called a continuance. The decision will specify the time before the individual is again considered for parole.

FOIA/The Freedom of Information Act: Any citizen may use the FOIA to request documents from any government department. The person requesting the documents will be subject to certain limitations and a fee. See MCL15.231.

Front Desk: Typically, this is the first place the public goes to any institution. A corrections officer staffs the front desk. This CO typically answers the facility's phone calls.

Passing the **GED General Educational Development** Program is equivalent to earning a high school diploma. The law requires that individuals have a high school diploma or GED before they are paroled. Exceptions are made for those unable to complete the program successfully.

GPS Global Positioning System: An individual on parole who must wear an ankle bracelet or tether can use this system to track their movements.

GRIEVANCE: A form completed by incarcerated people in response to a policy violation or inhumane living conditions. There are three levels: Steps I, II, and III. Before an individual can file a lawsuit over that issue, they must complete all three steps, unless they "win."

HOUSING UNIT/BLOCK: Terms used by incarcerated people and staff identifying a housing unit within a particular facility. These may be identified by a number or a name, such as Four Block or Spruce Unit.

IEP - Individual Education Plan: A plan was developed by school staff outlining educational goals for individuals with special education needs.

INDIGENT LOAN: If an individual has had less than \$10 in his or her account for at least 30 days, he or she can apply for a loan of \$10 per month to purchase mandatory items such as hygiene products. The amount will be collected upon receiving any money in his or her account.

INSPECTOR: A staff member at each facility who is part of the administration and is responsible for investigating complaints, security concerns, and other issues within the facility.

JPAY LETTER: An electronic letter is sent to an individual via the website. Employees may read it.

KIOSK: A computer in the housing unit where individuals submit store orders and hook up their tablets to be updated or send out emails.

KITE: An incarcerated person sends a kite, a written request, to facility staff via institutional mail. You can request information, medical care, or other services.

LEGAL MAIL: EXPEDITED LEGAL MAIL FORM/LEGAL DISBURSEMENT: Mail sent to an attorney or court. Individuals can use a form to send such correspondence more quickly than regular outgoing mail. If the person lacks sufficient funds, they can borrow postage for legal mail, and they will collect the amount upon receiving any payment.

LOP/SSANCTION/TOP LOCK: If an individual is found guilty of misconduct, they may be placed on Loss of Privileges, a status that restricts their access to various privileges, including electronics. If the person is on top lock status, they are unable to leave their cell during normal daytime activities, such as visiting the yard.

LT. - Lieutenant.

MAIL REJECTION: The individual and the sender receive a notice informing them that the institution has deemed the mail they received inappropriate. The person can request a hearing to have the item(s) evaluated for appropriateness.

The Michigan Department of Corrections, also known as **MDOC**, is responsible for managing facilities, parole, and circuit court probation. It also has a limited monitoring role for jails in Michigan.

Medical Detail: A document issued by medical staff authorizes individuals to use special medical accommodations or equipment that would otherwise be prohibited. Examples of such items include assignments to the bottom bunk, possession of a cane, crutches, a second pillow, or special shoes.

MISCONDUCT REPORT/TICKET: A report authored by a member of the MDOC 's staff an alleged violation of rules. There are three levels of misconduct, with the least serious receiving lighter punishment.

Notice of Intent (NOI): A written report informing an individual of an investigation or administrative hearing process dealing with items such as property, contraband, etc.

Non-contact visiting: - Visits at high security levels and at other levels if certain visitor restrictions have been imposed. These visits take place with a glass in between the individuals and by phones.

OBSERVATION CELL: - A cell where an individual is placed when staff believe they are unstable or have threatened to commit suicide or hurt themselves. Observation cells are sometimes also used when they have medical conditions where they need to be isolated.

Ombudsman's Office/Legislative Corrections Ombudsman: An office within the Legislative Service Bureau was created to investigate within the MDOC when serious and repetitive violations are brought to its attention. Generally, an individual must exhaust the grievance procedure before the Ombudsman can investigate. Corrections staff and the public may also file complaints with this office.

PAROLE: We refer to an individual's release before the end of their maximum sentence as parole. A parole agent supervises the individual in the community. It is important that the parolee follow all the rules set up by the parole board and the parole agent.

The Governor has appointed a ten-member board to consider whether to release an individual serving an indeterminate sentence on parole, parole someone serving a probable life sentence, and recommend a commutation of natural life sentences. Three-panel members make regular parole decisions.

PAROLE GUIDELINES: A tool the Parole Board uses to determine the chance of parole (high, medium, or low). The tool calculates a score based on various factors, including the nature of the current offense, criminal history, property and assault risk screens, age, conduct, completed programming, and mental health. We calculate the score based on the individual's criminal and social history. This could influence whether a parole board member interviews an individual.

The **PBF/IBF Prisoner Benefit Fund/Inmate Benefit Fund** collects money from vending machines, a percentage of people's hobby craft sales, and various other sources to cover expenses that benefit individuals, such as extra recreation equipment, cable television, etc. Staff and block representatives make the decisions.

PER Parole Eligibility Report: This report provides a brief description of the crime, prior parole history, institutional conduct (education, work, substance abuse programming, therapy, etc.), physical

health, financial status, parole plans, and so on. The Parole Board uses this report as one of its tools when deciding whether to grant parole or deny someone.

PROBATION: An individual may receive probation instead of or in addition to a jail or prison sentence. A probation agent will supervise him in the community. The probationer must adhere to all of the probation agent's rules.

PSI Pre-sentence Investigation Report: PSI Reports are created by a parole agent and include the agent's evaluation of the incarcerated person, the circumstances of the offense, the individual's personal and criminal history, and a sentencing recommendation. The victim may provide information about the crime's impact on their lives and express their opinions regarding the appropriate sentence. In the PSI Report, agents also score the sentencing guidelines and report that range to the court.

PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES: Woodland Center is the only facility providing mental health treatment exclusively. Special units within facilities or hospitals provide additional services. The levels of care range from CSI (counseling and intervention) to AC (acute care). They include OPT (outpatient mental health program), SSOTP (secure status outpatient mental health treatment program), ASRP (adaptive skills residential treatment program), and RTP (Residential Treatment Program), SSRTP (Secure Status Residential Treatment Program), and CSP (Crisis Stabilization Program), and RTS (Sub-acute/Rehabilitation Treatment Services).

Qualified Mental Health Professional (QMHP): A professional who is part of an interdisciplinary psychiatric treatment team.

QUARANTINE: The period an individual spends at a receiving facility when entering prison. See RG&C.

QUARTERMASTER/QUARTERMASTER KITE: A staff member who is responsible for issuing individuals' clothing and linens. Individuals can fill out a request form requesting replacement items or different sizes.

RG&C/RGC Reception and Guidance Center: The entry point into the system for men below the bridge. Male individuals spend the first few weeks in the Reception and Guidance Center. Here, MDOC personnel check the person's education level, work skills, mental health, physical health, etc. They decide where to live and program the person. They may transport individuals from the U.P. to Marquette as soon as possible and relocate them to RG&C in Jackson. Female individuals go to Huron Valley Women's Facility.

Restitution: Court-ordered payment to the victim, or repayment of a debt to the MDOC or a court.

Ride Out/Ride In: When an individual leaves or arrives at a facility.

RTP Residential Treatment Program: Inpatient mental health treatment provided in a special unit within a facility or at Woodland Center Correctional Facility.

RUM Resident Unit Manager: This person is in charge of the housing unit and supervises the ARUS (or ARUSs, if there are more than one in a housing unit) and custody staff (the officers). The RUM should be able to answer questions and help resolve problems. The RUM is just below the Assistant Deputy Warden (ADW) in the administrative chain of command.

The **RWA** provides a routine work assignment. The reception and guidance center often suggests giving individuals a routine work assignment. This implies assigning the individual to a facility job.

SAI Special Alternative Incarceration—See Boot Camp.

SCORESHEET: See Parole Guidelines.

SECUREPAK: An individual's family or friends may order food and other items in \$125 increments every quarter. You can place this order [online](#), via mail, or by phone.

Segregation is the housing that separates individuals from the general population due to misconduct, safety, or security risks. People sometimes call it solitary, box, or hole.

SGT. - Sergeant.

SHAKEDOWN: This term refers to a search by a corrections officer of an individual or an individual's cell for contraband. It also encompasses the inspection of visitors and items entering the facility.

SOAHR State Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules: Responsible for formal hearings and rehearing petitions. Most of these hearings involve serious misconduct convictions.

Individuals convicted of criminal sexual conduct are required to participate in **SOT/SOP** Sex Offender Therapy/Program. It is designed to help them understand why the offense was committed, have some understanding of the victim's feelings, and learn how to avoid future offenses.

The **SSOTP UNIT** Secure Status Outpatient Treatment Program Unit is a segregation housing unit where Outpatient Treatment Program services are provided.

The **SSRTP** Unit Secure Status Residential Treatment Program is a segregation housing unit that provides residential (inpatient) Treatment Program services.

STG: Security Threat Group

STORE: Individuals can order selected food, hygiene products, etc. at a kiosk machine. The system deducts money from the individuals' accounts and delivers items to the housing unit, typically every other week.

TETHER: An ankle-worn electronic device that tracks its wearer's movements. It is sometimes used to track a person who has been released from prison on parole.

VISITING ROOM: This is the facility area where persons on an individual's approved visitor list can visit with the individual during designated visiting days and hours.

VISITOR RESTRICTION: refers to the limitations imposed on visitors or individuals during their visits. Sometimes, these restrictions result from misconduct in the visiting room, and other times; they result from substance abuse misconduct that an individual has experienced. This can involve a complete ban on all visits or a restriction on only contact visits. It can be for a specified period of time or an indefinite period.

WARDEN: The head of administration is responsible for overseeing the facility.

WARDEN'S FORUM: All elected Block Reps meet monthly with the Warden or Warden's designated representative to address concerns within the housing units and policy/procedure issues in the facility.