



Department of Corrections 2012 Annual Government-to-Government Report on Tribal Relations

Overview

The Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) continues to work with Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes and tribal members toward identifying opportunities for partnership. Dennis Holmes, Religious Services Administrator, is the new tribal contact. All of the department's institutions maintained contact with tribal representatives and tribal volunteers to develop and present special cultural ceremonies, promote inmate participation in cultural events and affiliations, and recruit volunteers.

DOC has been a long-standing member of the Government-to-Government Public Safety Cluster. The agency actively participated in that cluster again this year. Our participation provides the DOC with current information on public safety activities and concerns among the various tribes, as well as those of other state agencies. Our participation also provides an avenue for building on-going relationships with tribal and state representatives. These relationships have been critical as we implement strategies and develop statewide procedures that may affect tribal members. We also believe that DOC participation has helped tribes and other state agencies better understand our agency mission and operations, and that our advice and participation in the cluster has been helpful and beneficial to Oregon's tribes.

The department continues to collect data on all inmates during the intake process. Disclosure of ethnicity or tribal affiliation is voluntary, which makes it difficult to collect accurate data. Inmates may also request a change to their ethnic designation at any time during their incarceration.

Update on DOC's Native American Procedures

The department began work on Native American spiritual and ceremonial procedures in 2007, following discussions with the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla. The purpose is to bring greater consistency and clarity to the Native American programs offered in Oregon's prisons. This handbook was completed and distributed to the institutions and Native American inmates in October of 2011. Many of the components in the procedure are already standard practice, or are being implemented. As a result, the Native American programs and services are more consistent throughout the department. Editions to the

handbook have taken place this year to add clarity and expand services to the Native American population in our institutions.

Native American Advisory Council

To assist with the handbook described above, to insure accuracy and thoroughness as well as to help advise the Department of Corrections regarding Native American issues, a Native American Advisory Council was formed utilizing currently active Native American volunteers from around the state who serve our inmate population. This council is led by Trish Jordan and interfaces with the Department of Corrections through Dennis Holmes, the Administrator of Religious Services.

Native American Events and Religious Services

A wide range of Native American services and events were provided during the year at all 14 of Oregon's prisons. DOC's Religious Services Unit continued to develop and deliver Native American spirituality and healing programs. Hundreds of male and female inmates attended Native American ceremonies and services.

Spiritual events and ceremonies that were provided include: sweat lodges, drumming circles, powwows, talking circles, spirit runs, smudging, pipe ceremonies, language development, counseling and other cultural and spiritual development. An extensive series of educational videos and seminars are given to help people understand and heal from historical trauma and to further develop healthy self and tribal identities.

Religious Services has developed healing ceremonies at multiple facilities and plans to expand the offering during the coming year. Religious Services staff works with the Eagle Repository in Colorado to facilitate acquisition of eagle feathers for inmates. Each prison provides regular care and maintenance of its Native American Sweat Lodge and outdoor worship areas.

Thanks to the efforts of our Religious Services unit and the Native American Advisory Council, 2012 saw some firsts among the accommodations made to our Native American inmate population. Several institutions, including EOCI and DRCI held their first ever powwow's on site. TRCI had their first Spirit Run and PRCF was able to hold their second powwow which, this year, included the allowance of family and guests from the outside to attend the ceremonies – a major step forward for the DOC in their mission of helping rehabilitate our inmates through family connectedness.

Native American Volunteers

DOC relies on Native American volunteers around the state. Volunteers conduct Native American ceremonies in the prisons and provide spiritual guidance for hundreds of inmates. The agency, as well as the inmates who benefit and participate in these programs, are very grateful to have such dedicated volunteers. Many of the services and

programs might not be available without their service. We cannot thank these volunteers enough for giving their time and energy.

Individual Institution Programs and Activities

Coffee Creek Correctional Facility, Wilsonville: This facility holds a sweat lodge once a month. Smudge ceremonies are held twice a month in the medium security facility. A talking circle is held once a month in the medium facility, and two times a month in the minimum facility. A Spring Ceremony was held again this year for both the medium and minimum facilities.

Columbia River Correctional Institution, Portland; and South Fork Forest Camp, Tillamook: CRCI: The facility generally has a Sweat Lodge once a month. At the forest camp, there are typically a drum circle and sweat lodge once every two months.

Deer Ridge Correctional Institution, Madras: DRCI holds a sweat lodge once a month. A drum circle is held every week. Talking circles and smudge ceremonies are held on occasion. DRCI also held its first powwow this year.

Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution, Pendleton: EOCI holds sweat lodges regularly. EOCI Religious Services established a spiritual seminar that has been requested by inmates. The facility Enrichment Committee established a Native American cultural seminar. EOCI also held its first powwow this year.

Mill Creek Correctional Institution and Santiam Correctional Institution, Salem: Native American religious activities at these facilities included sweat lodge ceremonies once per month every month this year. Song and drum practices were held once a week.

Oregon State Correctional Institution, Salem: Over the last year, OSCI has hosted regular Native American services and activities, including Sweat lodge and pipe ceremonies. A Sundance sweat was also held once a month.

Oregon State Penitentiary, Salem: OSP has a Lakota Oyate-Ki Native American club for inmates. This club meets every fourth Thursday of the month and helps support the weekly sweat lodge, pipe ceremony and drumming. They also help plan an annual Sundance sweat and a spirit run. OSP hosts an annual powwow. The work to produce such an event within the penitentiary is extensive. Bringing in so many guests and volunteers through security at one time is a challenge for staff and security. There are also two cultural television channels in the institution that rotate between Native American, Hispanic and Asian programming.

Powder River Correctional Facility, Baker City: With volunteer help, PRCF offers a sweat ceremony every month. Native circles are held every Friday night and include smudging, talking circles, drumming, songs and prayer. Native American video viewing is available every Wednesday. The facility has 42 Native American DVDs in its Chapel

Library. PRCF held its second powwow this year which included guests and family from the outside.

Shutter Creek Correctional Institution, North Bend: The Native American volunteers offer sweat lodge ceremonies on a monthly basis. There is one sweat lodge held for inmates in the SUMMIT program, and one is held for inmates in the general population. General population inmates have a drum line on weeks without a sweat lodge, and the volunteers have been available almost every other week.

Snake River Correctional Institution, Ontario: Sweat Lodges are provided four times a month, with one sweat for each housing unit a month. There was a Sundance sweat, a New Year's sweat, and a powwow held at the institution.

Two Rivers Correctional Institution, Umatilla: TRCI conducts sweat lodges two or three times a month with pipe and smudge ceremonies. Instructional/cultural videos and discussion are held three or four times a year, provided by volunteers. Change of seasons celebrations were held this year. Beading and braiding of medicine bags, prayer feathers, and spirit run staff were made in preparation of the annual spirit run. Native American volunteers provide individual counseling and mentorship to inmates when they are available. Special guests from various Native American tribal communities visit the institution. TRCI held its first Spirit Run this year.

Warner Creek Correctional Facility, Lakeview: This facility holds Native American talking circles on Fridays. The circles include discussion of current concerns, prayer, singing accompanied by a drum, and of course, smudging for purification and prayers for the individual. Volunteers led a monthly Sweat on the fourth Friday of each month. Native American inmates maintain the outdoor worship grounds. Warner Creek's greenhouse is used by Native American inmates for beading and craft sessions. There are occasional drumming circles that are held both indoors and outdoors. These circles teach new songs to all the participants. The facility has Native American books, CDs, and DVDs in its Chapel Library. Inmates at this facility grow and harvest white sage and sweet grass in the greenhouse. The white sage and sweet grass is used for on-site smudges and sweats and also sent to other institutions.

Conclusion

The department has continued to work with tribal representatives throughout the state to maintain cooperative relationships. We will work to continue and enhance those relationships in 2013. We look forward to more opportunities to involve the Native American community in our rehabilitative programs and the transition of inmates to communities. We also appreciate our Native American volunteers and look forward to working with them again in the coming year.

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