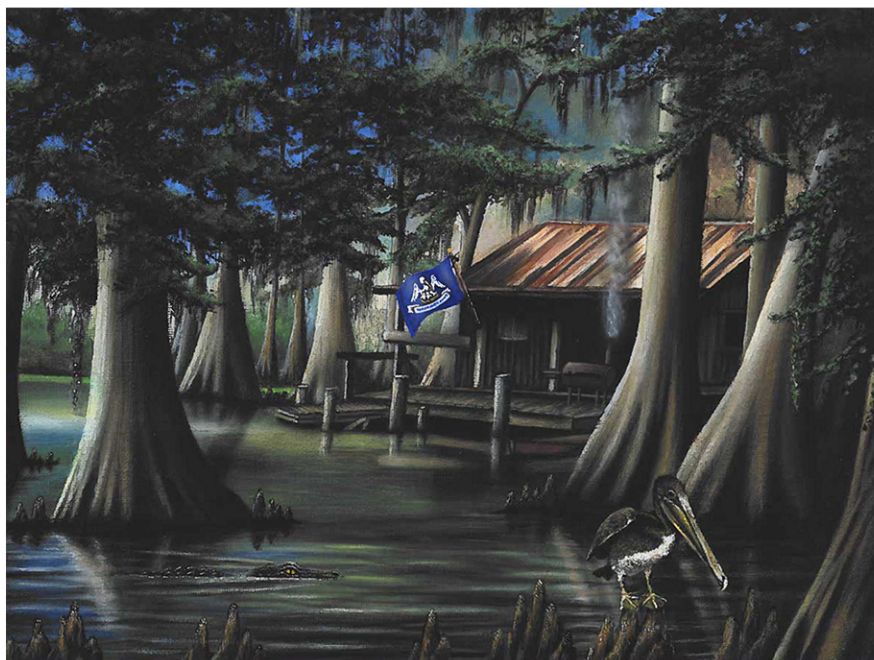


LA Informational Handbook for Friends and Families of People in Prison



Louisiana Department of Corrections

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Headquarters

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Letter from the Secretary



To the Family and Friends of an Imprisoned Person:

In the Louisiana Department of Corrections, we foster public safety, health, and wellbeing. We support victims and give back to people in need. We facilitate treatment, education, and job training to equip those in the criminal justice system with the skills they need to contribute to the state's communities, inside and outside our walls. After all, about 80 percent of people who enter prison return to Louisiana cities and towns. We want to make sure they're good neighbors. Our Department prioritizes prisoner's relationships and connections to you, their families and friends, as families are key in successful development and reentry. DOC recognizes, though, that imprisonment is often a difficult time for both the person serving time and their loved ones. In order to help you

through this stressful time, we have developed the following *Informational Handbook for Friends and Families of People in Prison* as a resource that provides a broad overview of the many facets of the Department and aims to answer some of the most frequently asked questions regarding the Louisiana prison system. My hope is that this Handbook communicates support from your state, as well as encourages and empowers you to support your incarcerated loved one in their journey towards maturity and responsible citizenship. Together, we hope to build a partnership that will result in the successful reentry of your loved one and the continued safety of our communities.

Together, we hope to be good neighbors and make good neighbors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Le Blanc". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "J".

Secretary James Le Blanc

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Introduction

Almost every prisoner is part of a family unit. Thus, incarceration is not only difficult for a prisoner, but also for their families and friends. Separation from your loved one through incarceration can be overwhelming. Louisiana understands this and has created a handbook in hopes of aiding you in this journey. This handbook has been developed as a resource for basic information regarding rules and regulations governing Louisiana's prison system, as they affect you and your loved one.

We encourage you to use this resource to assist you in maintaining contact with your incarcerated relative or friend, thus providing support for them and staying informed on their progress.

Please note that this handbook is for informational purposes only and is subject to change. If there are changes made in the Louisiana Department of Corrections' rules, policies, procedures, and in-state laws, those changes override this handbook.

Please also note that rules and procedures may vary between facilities within the state. This handbook is aimed at providing you with general and helpful information for a basic understanding of the prison system as a whole.

You can find more information on the Department of Corrections website: <http://doc.louisiana.gov/>.

The art included in this Handbook was created prisoners in the custody and control of DOC.

Mission and Organization of DOC

Vision, Mission, Goals, Priorities, and Recent Accomplishments

Vision

The Louisiana Department of Public Safety & Corrections creates a safer Louisiana by providing correctional programs committed to the protection of the public; safety of our staff; security of our incarcerated population; services to those victimized by crime; and opportunities for positive behavioral change in those remanded to our custody and/or supervision.

Mission

We achieve our vision through safe, secure prison operations and community correctional programs, development and implementation of effective criminal justice policies for Louisiana, and the provision of rehabilitative opportunities for our population that supports their successful transition into the community.

Goals and Priorities

Goals and priorities are built around the Department's commitment to public safety and rehabilitation and serve to guide our performance in carrying out our mission. These include:

- Staff and Prisoner Safety
- Provision of Basic Services
- Opportunity for Change
- Opportunity for Making Amends
- Reentry

Recent Accomplishments:

Criminal Justice Reform (CJR) and Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI)

On June 15, 2017, Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards signed the most comprehensive criminal justice reform in state history. Six Republicans, two Democrats, and one independent authored the bipartisan package of 10 bills, which enabled Louisiana to shed its long-held status as the state with the nation's highest imprisonment rate by the end of 2018. These efforts received widespread support, earning endorsements from the state district attorneys' association, business and faith leaders, and diverse coalitions of advocates and community members. The measures steer people convicted of less serious crimes away from prison, strengthen incarceration alternatives, reduce prison terms for those who can be safely supervised in the community, and remove barriers to re-entry. Seventy percent of the savings produced by these reforms - an estimated \$260 million over the next 10 years - will be reinvested into programs and policies proven to reduce recidivism and support victims of crime. The Department of Corrections is charged with facilitating this statewide reinvestment.

For more information on this initiative, visit

<https://www.doc.louisiana.gov/louisiana-justice-reinvestment-package>.

Organization

The Louisiana Department of Public Safety & Corrections, Corrections Services (also referred to as "DOC") is responsible for housing prisoners convicted of a felony and sentenced to the custody and care of the DOC. The DOC is also responsible for supervising persons convicted of a felony and sentenced directly to probation or those who release from felony imprisonment onto parole.

The Secretary, who is appointed by the governor, serves as the Department's chief executive officer. He or she oversees the DOC's two main components:

1. Institutions or Correctional Facilities, which is where prisoners are housed, and
2. Probation & Parole, which provides supervision of individuals outside of correctional facilities.

State Prisons v. Local Jail Facilities

Why aren't all felony prisoners housed in state prison facilities?

In the majority of states across the country, imprisoned persons convicted of felony offenses are housed in state prison facilities. Louisiana is unique from the rest of the country in that the state felony population is housed in both state facilities (also called a prison) and local jails. The reason for this is that in Louisiana, there are more imprisoned individuals than there is room for in state prisons. The history behind this housing plan came about in the 1970's when the federal court ordered Louisiana to address the overcrowding of state prisons. Due to a shortage of funds, state leadership at the time opted to partner with sheriffs to house state prisoners in local jails at a daily per diem rate. At the time, this was a lower cost/feasible solution to the overcrowding problem and was only intended to be a temporary fix until future budget opportunities would allow for Louisiana to build additional state prison facilities. Nearly 40 years later, this is the housing system still in place. Currently almost half of the state prisoner population is housed in local jails across the state. While DOC does not have direct control over the operations of local jails, DOC requires all jail facilities that house state prisoners to comply with certain standards, also known as the Basic Jail Guidelines (BJG).

This divided housing structure brings unique challenges, especially as it relates to proximity to family and loved ones, ability to provide critical reentry programming, and uniformity of certain procedures. While this housing structure is not ideal, slowly we have made great strides in the way we house prisoners at the local level. In fact, one major goal over the next 5 to 10 years is to regionalize housing placement based upon parish of conviction so that state prisoners housed in local jails can be much closer to loved ones. To do so, individuals must go through a reception center, which receives prisoners, assesses their needs, and places them in the ideal state or local facility. Due to the limited number of reception centers (two), along with the large number of prisoners, LA is inhibited from taking everyone through a reception process. However, Louisiana's long-term plan is to have reception centers statewide, so that every prisoner is assessed at intake to determine the best housing placement based upon the individual's needs.

In the meantime, there is a general principle that determines where a prisoner will likely be housed, whether in a state prison or in a local jail. In general, the following is true:

State: longer sentences and/or high custody, medical, disciplinary needs.

Local: shorter sentences and/or lower custody, medical, disciplinary needs.

Until we as a state are able to achieve a cohesive prison system where all state prisoners are housed in state prisons, there will be some understandable and unavoidable differences between state and local facilities. When there are notable differences between the two in the topics covered in this handbook, it will be indicated.

Please note that the following words are used interchangeably:

Local = local jail; local facility; jail

State = state prison; state facility; prison

Locating an Imprisoned Person

Family and friends of prisoners assigned to the custody of the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, Corrections Services can locate the prisoner by calling the Prisoner Locator at 225-383-4580, 24 hours a day.

Callers will need to know the prisoner's DOC number or may enter the prisoner's name and date of birth to access housing assignment, address of the facility where the prisoner is located, a contact phone number, and a projected release date (if available).

The system is updated every 24 hours and also includes information on those prisoners under probation or parole (community) supervision.

The Prisoner Locator system will only give information for DOC prisoners – not for pre-trial or those individuals serving parish or municipal sentences.

Louisiana Automated Victim Notification System (LAVNS) is also available. Please see the *Victims Services* section of this handbook for more details.

Time Computation and Release Mechanisms

Louisiana laws governing sentencing are very complicated. Multiple things can affect the calculation of how much actual time a person must serve in prison for their particular felony conviction. In general, Louisiana laws designate offenses in the following three (3) categories: violent, non-violent, or sex offenses. These categories affect things like Good Time rates, parole eligibility, and whether or not someone can earn additional credits towards release.

Additional things that can impact time calculation include the laws in place at the time a person committed the crime, multiple concurrent or consecutive sentences, time served in jail before the conviction, prior convictions, additional credits earned while in prison, benefit restrictions listed in individual crime, special conditions imposed by the sentencing judge, and whether or not a person was sentenced as a habitual offender.

Types of Releases:

There are several ways a prisoner can release from prison. These are:

- Release due to Diminution of Sentence (also known as Good Time Parole Release);
- Parole Release granted by the Committee on Parole; and
- Full Term Sentence Completion/ Release

The majority of prisoners that release every year are released due to diminution of sentence or due to parole granted by the parole board.

• **Release due to Diminution of Sentence:** Diminution of sentence, also known as **GoodTime Parole Release (GTP)**, is release from prison based on laws that allow prisoners to earn credit for positive actions while in prison. A prisoner can lose Good Time through things such as bad behavior. This type of release is granted once a prisoner serves the time required in law. The person must then serve out the remainder of their sentence on parole supervision until the full-term completion. In general, persons convicted of non-violent offenses must serve approximately 35% of their sentence in prison before releasing via GoodTime. In general persons convicted of violent offenses (if not otherwise restricted in law from earning Good Time and depending upon conviction date) must serve 75%-85% before releasing via Good Time.

• **Parole Release:** Parole release is a release from prison by action of the Committee on Parole. Prisoners that are eligible under law for consideration may be considered for release in a hearing in front of the Committee on Parole. A release is **not guaranteed**. If granted, a prisoner is released onto parole supervision under the Division of Probation and Parole until the full-term completion of the sentence. In general, prisoners serving for a non-violent conviction are eligible for consideration before the committee after serving 25% of their sentence. In general, prisoners serving for a violent conviction (if offense allows for parole eligibility) are eligible for consideration before the committee after serving 85% of their sentence (if crime committed on or before 08/2016), 75% of their sentence (if crime committed after 08/2016 but before 11/2017), or after serving 65% (if first offense and crime committed after 11/2017).

• **Full-term Sentence Completion/Release:** Certain crimes do not allow for any type of parole eligibility or Good Time but require that a person serve their entire sentence in prison. Upon the completion of the "full-term" of the sentence, a person is released. No additional supervision is imposed after release.

Reception, Diagnostic, and Classification

NOTE: Below applies to those prisoners processing into the DOC through one of the **state prison reception centers**. The intake process for prisoners placed directly in **local jails** after sentencing is determined by that facility's intake policies. The BJG requires a basic mental health and medical evaluation at intake.

What happens when an individual first enters prison?

When prisoners first enter the state institution, they will go through a Reception Diagnostic Center (RDC). They will be searched (along with their property) and will be given a haircut (male only), shower, clean clothing, a picture ID, and a phone sheet. The Intake officers will inventory their property and fingerprint each prisoner. The prisoner will be given the opportunity to send home any items that are not allowed. Classification, Mental Health, Medical, and Education will evaluate the prisoner. After all evaluations are completed, Classification will give them a temporary dorm assignment until permanent housing is determined. All prisoners will be issued a property bag containing state issued t-shirts, boxers, socks, etc. and sent to their assigned dorm locations. The estimated time for this process is about 3-5 weeks.

Can contact be made with the prisoner at the Reception and Diagnostic Center?

Prisoners who come to the intake center with a phone list established will be able to use the phones immediately to contact those on their list. If they do not already have a list, they can submit a list for approval and it will usually be added within five days. Prisoners in intake status are not allowed to establish a visiting list. However, they may submit requests for Special Visits that may be approved by the Warden or Deputy Warden.

Where are the Reception and Diagnostic centers located?

Reception Diagnostic Centers (RDC) are located at Elayn Hunt Correctional (EHC), Raymond Laborde Correctional (RLCC), and Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women (LCIW). LCIW was recently closed, however, due to flooding. Addresses can be found at www.doc.louisiana.gov or in the *State Prison Facilities* section of this Handbook.

Classification and Custody Level Determination

All prisoners are classified according to management and confinement requirements necessary for protection of the public's safety, prevention of escape, maintenance of control and order, and the safety of staff and prisoners. In addition, all prisoners entering the Department undergo a series of assessments to determine their specific needs so they can be placed in appropriate reentry programs, which aim to provide a seamless plan of services and supervision. This also affects where they are housed.

Custody Level refers to the type of housing and level of supervision required for a prisoner. Custody assignments reflect public safety as the first priority, staff and prisoner safety within the institution as the second priority, and finally, institutional or prisoner needs. Other factors include offense, sentence, age, adjustment potential, excessive criminal behavior, escape history, and observable behavior.

Custody Levels include: General population (Medium and Minimum), Restrictive Housing, Protective Custody, Working Cellblock, and Medical Custody.

State Prison Facilities

As facilities differ throughout the state, most have things that they specialize in, which often helps to determine where individuals will be housed. The following are very brief and basic explanations of each facility's specialties, if applicable, along with their addresses:

Allen Correctional Center: under Raymond Laborde; general needs
3751 Lauderdale Woodyard Road
Kinder, LA 70648

B.B. Rayburn Correctional Center: general needs
27268 Hwy. 21 North
Angie, LA 70426

David Wade Correctional Center: N5 Unit (special protection for political figures, law enforcement officers, etc.)
670 Bell Hill Road
Homer, LA 71040

Dixon Correctional Institute: dialysis unit
P.O. Box 788
Jackson, LA 70748

Elayn Hunt Correctional Center: life sentences; medical/mental health needs
6925 Highway 74
St. Gabriel, LA 70776

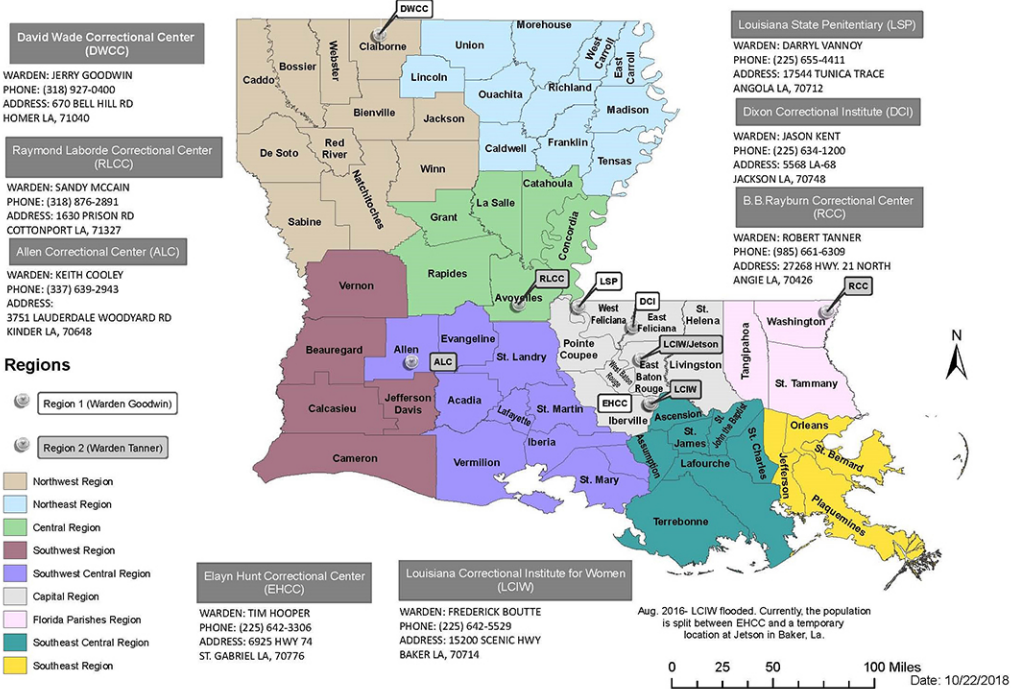
Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women (LCIW): Females

Due to the August 2016 flooding in South Louisiana, LCIW is undergoing repairs and restoration. During the renovation, the prisoners usually housed at LCIW are in one of three facilities: the former Jetson Center for Youth, Louisiana State Penitentiary (Angola), and Elayn Hunt Correctional Center.

Louisiana State Penitentiary (Angola): life sentences; death row; health issues
17544 Tunica Trace
Angola, LA 70712

Raymond Laborde Correctional Center: provides work crews in the community
1630 Prison Road
Cottonport, LA 71327

STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES



Local Jail Facilities

Local facilities are in parishes throughout the state. For locations and Basic Jail Guideline (BJG) Regions, see the map below.

Local Facilities by BJG Regions



Programs

The Department provides a wide array of programs, including basic education, vocational and occupational programming, faith-based opportunities, substance abuse programs, mental health treatment, and values development. These programs help prepare prisoners for their return to their communities and to remain there as productive, taxpaying citizens. It is important that programs are not only available, but also utilized to the fullest.

Prisoners may request to participate in programs through Classification in state facilities and through Program Coordinators at the local facilities. Staff in state facilities and/or Program Coordinators at local facilities may then enroll eligible and suitable prisoners in programs based on identified need and other factors.

By law, prisoners can earn up to a total of 360 days of additional 'Good Time' toward their projected release date via the completion of Certified Treatment Rehabilitation Programs (CTRP). It is important to note that certain crimes have restrictions on the amount of Good Time a prisoner can earn. Prisoners who participate in CTRP can write the program coordinator if they have questions about their eligibility for program credits. It is also important to note that individuals are prioritized, often based on their release date and/or needs.

The following is a brief description of the programs:

1. Education

It is the goal of the Department to work with each prisoner to improve his/her educational level and subsequently improve his/her chances of becoming a responsible, productive member of the community. The Department provides educational opportunities in the areas of:

- General Education Development (GED) or High School Equivalency Preparation (HSE-Prep)
- Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Developmental Studies
- Literacy
- Special Education
- Associate Degree Opportunities.

2. Job Skills Training

The Department offers the following vocational programs at various institutions:

Automotive Technology, Building Technology, Carpentry, Collision Repair, Computer Specialist Applications/Operations, Culinary Arts, Electrician/ Electromechanical Technology, General Construction, General Studies Associate Degree, Heating/Air-Conditioning/Refrigeration, Horticulture, Job Life Skills, Masonry, Outdoor Power Equipment Technology, Office Systems Technology, Offset Printing Operations, Plumbing, Upholstery, Welding.

3. Substance Abuse

The Department offers a continuum of substance abuse education and treatment options to address diverse needs.

4. Values Development

- Most prisoners have a values base that is inconsistent with what it takes to adjust in our society (Thinking for a Change, Living in Balance, etc.).

It is imperative that we continue to install faith-based and character-based programs to offset these moral deficits. There are numerous religious programs and organizations available for prisoners.

5. Therapeutic Programs

The Department provides therapeutic programs for various areas of life for prisoners. The following are the general programs, each of which contains various support groups, clubs, and/or classes:

- Anger and Stress Management
- Communicable Disease Education
- Grief Counseling
- Life Skills
- Parenting Skills

6. Sex Offender Treatment

The Department provides treatment programs for sex offenders. It is multi-phased and tailored to each individual, based on their criminogenic need. These programs provide them the opportunity to learn, develop, and use risk management skills that could help them live a lifestyle devoid of hurting others.

7. Specialized Programming

- Communication Dynamics
- Commitment for Change: Overcoming Errors in Thinking
- Personal Awareness and Reflection Development (PARD)
- Self-Esteem
- Self-Help
- Sexual Trauma Resolution Group
- Victim Awareness

8. Youthful Offender Program (YOP)

There are an increasing number of youthful prisoners who may be spending important developmental years in adult prisons. Louisiana law allows for, in certain instances, juveniles under the age of 18, to be prosecuted as adults and if convicted housed within the adult corrections system. Youthful prisoners often have different needs than the adult population. The YOP addresses these concerns. Youthful prisoners are housed separately from the adult population until they reach the age of 18. While enrolled, youthful prisoners work toward obtaining their high school equivalency and be involved in a variety of self-help programs, as well as work. This program provides positive experiences that foster a solid foundation and instill spiritual and moral values that change criminal thinking.

9. 100 Pre-Release and Reentry Transition

This curriculum focuses on preparing prisoners for their successful return to society by providing necessary skills and attempting to minimize risks of recidivism, such as homelessness, unemployment, etc. For more detailed information, see the *Pre-Release Planning and Reentry* section of this Handbook.

10. Prisoner Clubs & Organizations

In addition to the Department-offered programs, prisoners have their own clubs and organizations. These are different at each facility and cover numerous areas of life.

NOTE: *The availability and access of programs differs depending upon location of prisoner, whether state or local.*

Staying in Touch

The Department encourages positive communication between prisoners and family members/friends. As such, DOC offers several avenues of communication for prisoners assigned to state correctional facilities. Prisoners may communicate via regular U.S. mail, secure telephones, and secure electronic communication (similar to email provided by JPAY). Family members may also send money to prisoners in DOC custody.

Telephone Communication

Department regulations allow for each prisoner to have an approved master list of up to twenty (20) telephone numbers for family, friends, and legal calls. A prisoner can update the list on a quarterly basis.

Personal calls may be monitored and/or recorded for security purposes. Legal calls, however, are not.

If a prisoner attempts to dial any telephone number not on his/her approved list from a state correctional facility, the call is automatically blocked. Individual telephone numbers can be blocked as well. Members of the public can contact the facility directly or the Office of Adult Services (225-342-9711) if they are receiving unwanted or harassing phone calls from prisoners at state correctional facilities.

Prisoners can only make collect calls and prisoner telephones are limited to out-going calls only, usually limited to 15 minutes. No one can make a call to a prisoner telephone.

When a prisoner makes a call, the called party is notified that it is a collect call from a prisoner at a state prison facility. The called party is given the option of accepting or refusing the call.

Telephone communication access is provided by an outside vendor, Securus Technologies. Securus' Customer Service number is 1-800-844-6591 for individuals needing assistance with billing issues, problems receiving calls from prisoners, receiving unwanted calls, and/or requesting a block on future calls from a prisoner or prisoners.

The Department allows prisoners to call approved cell phone numbers under specific guidelines. The called party must set up an account with Securus and provide their primary residence information. Calls to prepaid cell phones are not allowed. The prisoner must have your cell phone number on his/her approved phone list.

Prisoners housed in local level facilities must utilize the phone systems that are set up in those facilities. Information on how to use the system can be obtained from the staff at the assigned facility by the prisoner.

In no instance is a prisoner allowed to possess or utilize a cellular telephone while incarcerated. Family and friends are warned not to send or bring cellular telephones to prisoners and doing so will result in prosecution for introduction of contraband into a correctional facility and may be subject to a fine up to \$2000 and up to five years in prison.

Electronic Communication

The Department offers electronic communication for staying in touch as well. JPay provides email service that is usually faster than regular mail, and photographs (in good taste) can be attached to the emails. This service is all done through a secure connection, so prisoners never actually have access to the internet.

Visit <http://www.jpay.com/> for more information.

Sending Money

Please note that deposits of \$500 or greater may be investigated, which may delay funds being available to the prisoner until the investigation is completed.

Family and friends can send funds to prisoners in the following ways:

1. Mail

Family and friends may continue to send money orders via mail. There is NO charge for sending money orders via mail. JPay requires a JPay deposit slip to accompany the money order. This deposit is mailed to JPay's address in Miami, Florida. This means that mail time to Florida is likely longer than to a DOC facility and that should be taken into account when mailing funds.

Also, there is a two-day processing time for JPay to put the funds into the DOC account. Then there is a two-day processing time allowance for getting the funds into the prisoner's account. The maximum amount that can be sent via mail is \$999.99.

2. Walk-up Locations for MoneyGram



MoneyGram is located in Walmart and CVS Pharmacy locations; it is also available in other places that display the MoneyGram logo. MoneyGram provides a service for transmitting funds from one point to another using electronic means.

Family and friends provide the MoneyGram office with cash only, along with the prisoner's information, and MoneyGram will electronically submit the payment to the receiving company/destination for a fee.

MoneyGram is transmitted electronically so it is faster than money orders. There is a 2-day turnaround on funds being placed into the prisoner's account. The maximum amount that can be sent via MoneyGram is \$4,999.99.

3. Internet

Family and friends may go online to www.JPay.com and send funds using only Visa and MasterCard (credit/debit cards). There are fees associated with the internet transactions. These fees can be found on the DOC website, www.doc.la.gov.

There is a 2-day turnaround on funds being placed into the prisoner's account. The daily cut-off time to submit a payment is 10 p.m. CST. The maximum amount that can be sent via Internet is \$300.00.

4. Telephone

Family and friends may call 1-800-574-5729 and transfer funds using only Visa and MasterCard (credit/debit cards). There are fees associated with the telephone transactions. These fees can be found on the DOC website, www.doc.la.gov.

There is a 2-day turnaround on funds being placed into the prisoner's account. The daily cut-off time to submit a payment is 10 p.m. CST. The maximum amount that can be sent via telephone is \$300.00.

5. Lobby Kiosks

Kiosks are located in all state correctional facility visiting areas. Family and friends will be able to provide funds to the prisoners by credit/debit card or cash.

There is a 2-day turnaround on funds being placed into the prisoner's account. Fees will apply for credit or debit card transactions (same as internet). Cash deposited in Lobby Kiosks have a per transaction fee of \$4.00 for deposits from \$.01 to \$500.00.

Visitation

The Department recognizes the importance of visitation in maintaining prisoners' relationships with family and loved ones. Maintaining relationships will not only make prisoners' experience while incarcerated more productive, but will also help prisoners have a more successful reintegration into society. As such, visitation is an integral part of each institution.

Please see the Department's website at www.doc.la.gov for Institution-specific visiting information, such as each institution's address and phone number, directions, information regarding local transportation, and visiting days and hours.

Please note that visitation is a privilege and not a right on both the part of the prisoner as well as those wishing to visit. This makes it very important that all visitors follow the guidelines for visitation so that they may continue to see their loved one. Visitation privileges may be revoked for violation of department rules and regulations.

Visitation Application Process

Prisoners are responsible for initiating the visitation application process by sending the Application for Visiting Privileges to persons they wish to visit them. Then, the visiting person must complete the application they received and mail it to the facility where the prisoner is housed. If the prospective visitor is a minor, their parent/legal guardian must fill it out for them. Prisoners may have up to ten (10) visitors on their visiting list; they may add or delete people on their list.

Visitor Identification and Registration upon Entry to Institution

All visitors will register when they enter the institution. The visitor will provide his/her name, address, and relation to the prisoner. All visitors over the age of eighteen (18) must have a valid picture identification with them, such as a license or passport.

Dress Code for Visitors

Visiting areas are designed to cultivate a family atmosphere for families and friends of all ages. Visitors must dress accordingly, wearing nothing that poses a threat to the safety, security, or good order and administrative manageability of the facility.

Clothing that is **NOT ALLOWED** while visiting includes the following:

- Clothing similar to those worn by prisoners (blue jeans, blue chambray shirts, gray or white sweatshirts, solid white or solid gray t-shirts)
- Clothing similar to those worn by correctional officers (camouflage, blue battle dress uniforms)
- Clothing that exposes bare (or almost-bare) shoulders, such as strapless tops or spaghetti straps
- Sheer or transparent clothing, and clothing that exposes one's stomach, such as crop-tops
- Overly-tight clothing, such as yoga pants, spandex, etc.
- Swimsuits, house slippers, or shower shoes (wearing no shoes is also prohibited, unless by a child who is being carried by an adult)
- Exposed undergarments or tops with no undergarments underneath
- Anything with obscene or profane writing, images, or pictures; anything that might appear gang-related or be indicative of gang affiliation
- Mini-skirts and cut-off pants
- Hats or head coverings, except as required by religious beliefs
- Please note that skirts, shorts, dresses, etc. must be no shorter than one (1) inch above the kneecap and not have deep, revealing slits

Remember that these guidelines are for the protection of you and your loved one. Abiding by these guidelines will help visitation run smoothly for everyone involved—the correctional officer, the prisoner, and you. Correctional officers will turn you away for improper dress, an easily-avoidable issue. Please dress as modestly as possible.

Infants

If the visitor has an infant with them, the following items are permitted: four (4) diapers; two (2) jars of vacuum-sealed baby food; two (2) plastic bottles of milk, water, or juice; one change of clothing; one baby blanket; one plastic baby spoon; and one clear plastic bag of baby wipes. These items (except the blanket) must be stored in a single clear plastic container, like a zip-lock bag.

Important Notes Regarding Visitation

- Visitors are not allowed to enter the grounds of an institution while intoxicated in any way.
- Visitors are prohibited from bringing contraband or other prohibited items into the institution, such as weapons, alcohol, cell phones, etc.
- Visitors are allowed to bring only enough cash money for vending machines and/or concessions.
- Persons and personal vehicles may be searched.
- Drug detection canines may be in use at the facility.
- Body scanners are often used at the facilities.
- Pregnant women must provide documentation to verify their pregnancy to avoid the body scanner; the women may have to produce a positive pregnancy test administered by staff. Remember, this is to keep contraband from entering the facilities.
- Visitation will be supervised by staff.
- During contact visiting, prisoners and visitors may exchange a brief embrace and kiss upon meeting and leaving. They may also hold hands.
- Prisoners who have noncontact visiting are restricted from having physical contact with visitors by a physical barrier, like a screen or glass. Phones or speakers are typically used in these interactions.
- Children must be supervised by an adult visitor. Some facilities have a Children's Corner, a place for children to play.
- There are restrictions for visitation between sex offenders and minor children.

What Will Visitation Look Like?

In general, visitation will look like the following: You will drive to the institution and park, leaving prohibited items and personal possessions (wallet, cellphone, purse, etc.) in your locked vehicle. You will walk to the Visitation processing center, where you will register and present your ID. You may be searched for contraband and/or asked to walk through a body scanner. It is important to note that you will be told to leave if you do not adhere to the clothing guidelines for visitors. Once processed, you will be directed to the Visitation area; depending on the facility, you may walk there or be taken on a van or bus. During this process, the prisoner will be notified of your arrival. Please note that you may have to wait for them when you get to Visitation. If it is a contact visit, you will likely be in a cafeteria-type setting. You may be able to purchase food, sit at a table, or take pictures. You will be allowed to touch the person you are visiting in an appropriate manner, such as holding hands. If it is a non-contact visit, you will not be allowed to touch but may communicate verbally. Please note that if you have children with you, you are responsible for keeping them well-behaved; depending upon the location, there may be a designated Children's Corner for children to play in. You will be supervised by staff during visitation and will be allowed to visit for the allotted amount of time. Then, staff will signal the end of Visitation and you will return to the Visitation processing center.

Please see the Department's website for more specific information regarding guidelines, protocols, and procedures: <https://doc.louisiana.gov/visitation-info>.

Institutional Operations

Custody and Security

1. Prisoner conduct rules and disciplinary procedures

As part of the orientation process, prisoners are notified of the rules and procedures that govern them while incarcerated. "Disciplinary Rules and Procedures for Adult Prisoners," also known as the "Prisoner Rulebook," is accessible to prisoners at every facility. As such, when prisoners have questions or concerns, they should refer to the Prisoner Rulebook for guidance and proper procedure.

We encourage families to understand that part of the rehabilitation process for the prisoner while incarcerated is learning to accept responsibility for oneself. As such, inquiries should be initiated by the prisoner through the appropriate staff member where he/she is assigned and not through a family member. Any correctional officer or the prisoner's classification officer will be able to assist them in understanding appropriate procedure.

2. How is an individual charged with a rule violation?

If a staff member witnesses or has knowledge of any act by a prisoner that is in violation of the rules or posted policies, the employee will first attempt, if appropriate, to resolve the matter informally. If not appropriate or not able to be resolved informally, a Disciplinary Report is completed. Prisoners are served with notice of charges at least 24 hours prior to hearing.

3. What are the punishments if a prisoner is found guilty?

After a finding of guilt, the Disciplinary Officer or the Disciplinary Board may impose one or two penalties for each violation. Penalties may include extra duty, loss of electronic media players, loss of recreation and yard activities, loss of telephone privileges, job change, etc.

4. How does a prisoner file a grievance about a particular issue?

Prisoners are first encouraged to speak with staff if they have an issue of concern or need. However, if for some reason communicating with a staff member is not helpful, they are asked to put their concerns in writing and submit the letter to appropriate staff. Lastly, if these mechanisms do not answer their question or address their grievance, they may submit the issue through the Administrative Remedy Procedure (ARP).

The Department and all local jails housing state prisoners have established Administrative Remedy Procedures (ARP) through which a prisoner may, in writing, request a formal review of a complaint related to any aspect of his incarceration. Through this procedure, prisoners shall receive reasonable responses and, where appropriate, meaningful remedies.

5. Why are prisoners transferred to different prisons?

Prisoners are assigned to facilities based on custody classification, space availability, level of care designations (medical and/or mental health), and many other contributing factors. While DOC would like to make assignments with only geographical considerations in mind, it is not possible to do this based on, for instance, the demand for beds in various areas of the state. As such, prisoners are placed in locations that best meet their needs and the space and security needs of the Department. Prisoners may be transferred to different prisons for a variety of reasons, from protection and safety concerns to medical, mental health, and geographical issues.

Searches

6. How are prisoners searched?

Prisoners may be searched at any time. Property Searches and Pat-Down Searches (or “Frisk Searches”), a search of a fully-clothed prisoner, may be conducted by an officer of the opposite gender and may be conducted at any time. A General Search, a search of both person and property, may be conducted at any time. A Strip Search may be conducted by employees of the same sex as the prisoner without the requirement of reasonable suspicion or probable cause, but must be approved by a Captain or higher-ranking employee in the chain of command. Strip Searches are documented by employees. Visual Body Cavity Searches may be conducted routinely under certain circumstances. Body Cavity Searches are only permitted under strict circumstances. Finally, searches by drug-sniffing dogs may be conducted at any time.

7. Can prisoners have personal items?

Prisoners can have personal items, including items provided for them by the facility and any items purchased in the canteen. Prisoners are informed of their allowed items at the facility where they are housed. Some examples of allowed items include, but are not limited to, jeans, socks, a watch, CD’s, scarves, pillow cases, pajamas, belts, t-shirts, hair dryer, etc. Some items a prisoner can purchase at the canteen include, but are not limited to, candy bars, soup, instant noodles, coffee, etc.

Health Care

DOC provides a system for evaluating the health needs of prisoners entering the system, transferring between facilities, and during their period of incarceration. DOC ensures that the health needs of the institution are met to ensure that prisoners receive the proper housing and activity assignments.

Prisoners receive medical and mental health screenings on Intake. These screenings include, but are not limited to, inquiry into the prisoner’s past history of serious infectious or communicable illness, current illness and health problems, dental problems, substance use, possible pregnancy, observation of behavior, mental status, skin conditions, and indications of drug use. **NOTE:** *Prisoners housed at a local facility that present significant medical needs are transferred to a state facility. Comprehensive health appraisals are completed for each prisoner at a later date and include, but are not limited to, any necessary laboratory and diagnostic tests.*

Prisoners have access to both on-site and off-site health care, which include specialty services such as hematology, oncology, gastroenterology, cardiology, dermatology, neurology, ophthalmology, and urology. Chronic care clinics are provided as well as services for detection, diagnosis, and treatment of mental illnesses. Every state facility has end-of-life care. Angola (LSP) has a certified Hospice facility.

In an effort to ensure continuity/continuing of medical care, DOC partners with Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) to facilitate the Medicaid enrollment process for eligible persons prior to the prisoner's release.

8. How does a prisoner make a health care appointment?

Prisoners request sick call/call out. This is done either electronically or by filling out a sick call request, depending on the facility.

9. Do prisoners pay for health care services?

Yes, a minimal copay applies. This is usually \$3.00 per visit.

10. Can prisoners use their family physician to provide medical services?

No.

11. Can medications be sent to the prisoner in prison?

No.

12. What if a prisoner needs to be hospitalized?

Prisoners are evaluated and then transported to the appropriate hospital.

13. Are services available to pregnant offenders?

Yes. There are regulations in place that cover pregnancy care, which includes prenatal services, monitoring, etc.

14. What if treatment by a specialist is necessary?

Prisoners are referred to outside specialists, receive telemedicine services with appropriate specialist(s), or seen by a specialist in an on-site clinic.

15. Can I check on the medical status of my loved one?

Yes, but State and Federal Patient Privacy laws (HIPPA) require that your name be listed on his/her Medical Information Release Form. Prisoners are advised during intake to complete this "Medical Information Release Form" with the names of any family or friends that they grant permission to DOC to disclose medical information to in event of an inquiry or emergency. If he or she has not done so already, ask your imprisoned loved one to add your name to his/her Medical Information Release Form. The law strictly prohibits DOC from providing any prisoners medical information to a person who is not included on a prisoner's release form.

Mental Health

DOC requires that all prisoners entering a state or local facility receive a mental health evaluation and are assigned to housing based upon this assessment. Prisoners are able to, based on their needs, see clinicians and psychiatrists housed in state facilities. Mental Health also works closely with Probation & Parole to provide a continuum of care for prisoners after release.

16. How does a prisoner receive mental health services?

Prisoners are evaluated at intake and subsequently housed at a facility capable of handling the needed level of mental health services. Prisoners see clinicians and psychiatrists on-site as necessary.

17. What services are available to prisoners with developmental disabilities?

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the DOC provides prisoners with equal access to housing, programs, services, and the use of facility resources, regardless of disability. Access to qualified interpreters as well as auxiliary aids and services are provided when necessary, in accordance with Department regulations (rules).

Food Services

NOTE: The following pertains to state prisons. Food services at the local level are determined by the local jail facility's policy.

18. What types of meals are served in prison?

The DOC provides meals that are nutritionally balanced for all prisoners. All meals are served in a manner that meets the Louisiana health and safety codes. There is a standardized menu developed by a qualified nutritionist or dietician to ensure the recommended daily allowances for nutrition are met, suggested by federal guidelines.

19. Are therapeutic diets available?

Yes. Therapeutic diets are provided to those prisoners whose clinical findings necessitate an alteration from the regular institutional diet as part of their medical treatment plan. Therapeutic diets must be prescribed by a health care practitioner. These meals are developed by a registered dietitian.

20. Are there special meals for holidays?

Yes.

21. Who cooks the meals served in prison?

Prisoners and/or DOC Food Services staff. Prisoners are compensated for their work by either adding Good Time or being paid in wages.

Prisoner Finances

NOTE: The following pertains to state prisons. Prisoner finances at the local level are determined by the local jail facility's policy. Local facilities provide some of these opportunities, but they likely differ. All, however, have an account of some sort that allows them to have money for the canteen/commissary.

22. Can prisoners have money in prison?

Yes. Though prisoners cannot have cash (or coins) in their possession, they have what is called a Drawings account and a Savings account where their funds are kept. These are similar to Checking accounts and Savings accounts, respectively, in the free population.

23. Are prisoners paid for work while they are in prison?

Yes. After three years of incarceration, prisoners are eligible to earn certain wages for their work. These rates are determined by Louisiana laws. Prisoners typically have two options for payment: incentive wages or Good Time. Please note that there are different jobs while imprisoned, and those different jobs may have differing payments and wages.

Based on their pay rate and hours worked, earned funds are deposited from Prisoner Banking into the prisoner's account. There is a certain fund balance that all prisoners are required to keep in their Savings account at all times. If prisoners have not reached this requirement for Savings, at least 50% of their payments will go straight to their Savings account. Once they reach the requirement, the prisoner can use their own discretion as to where their funds will be placed (whether Savings or Drawings).

24. Do prisoners receive their money when released?

Yes. After any outstanding fines and fees related to the conviction are paid, the remaining finances will be given to the released individual. However, there is a certain process in place for the release of money wherein the released individual will not leave prison with, for example, an envelope of cash.

25. Can prisoners buy personal items?

Yes, prisoners can purchase items from a "store" called the Canteen. Within state facilities, the Department oversees the Canteen. At the local level, the DOC does not oversee the canteen, so individual jails may or may not offer the same items.

In addition, the Canteen Package Program is available. This program gives family and friends an opportunity to order pre-approved food and hygiene products and personal property items for their loved ones incarcerated at state institutions. Eligible prisoners are now able to participate as well by ordering packages directly through each program. This program is a partnership between Louisiana Prison Enterprises and Union Supply.

For more information, see <http://www.prisonenterprises.org/canteen-packaging-program>.

Transitional Work Program (TWP)

Transitional Work Programs (TWP) are programs that allow eligible prisoners to work approved jobs in the community while they are still in prison. This program provides participants with the opportunity to re-establish dignity and self-esteem, and helps in their transition back into the community as responsible adults.

Prisoners that are approved for the program are required to work at an approved job and, when not working, must return to the structured environment of the assigned facility. All participants are required to be employed full-time while in the program and may be required to participate in community service. In addition to employment requirements, participants are encouraged (and may be mandated in some cases) to attend educational substance abuse and job skills programs.

The Transitional Work Program has been shown to reduce recidivism by:

- Teaching new job skills and positive work habits
- Allowing participants to earn money to help support family members, provide victim restitution, child support, pay court fees, and/or have funds available to help their transition to society upon release

There are other benefits as well. Prisoners become taxpayers, not tax consumers, and are able to earn wages while in prison to pay victim restitution, child support, court costs, and fines.

How does a prisoner get into the Transitional Work Program (TWP, formerly known as Work Release)?

A prisoner's work release eligibility date is noted on the Master Prison Record as "WRE." The Office of Adult Services will automatically evaluate a prisoner's eligibility for this program. If a prisoner has questions about his/her eligibility for the TWP, he/she should write the Records Office at the facility where they are assigned.

Unless precluded by law or Department regulation, in general, the following persons are eligible for consideration for work release within the following time frame:

- Non-violent prisoners: within the last five (5) years of their sentence.
- Habitual prisoners: within the last year of their sentence.
- Violent prisoners: within the last six (6) months of their sentence (unless the sentence is 15 years or longer, which allows consideration within the last one (1) year of sentence).

In addition to being legally eligible, a prisoner must be suitable (for example, low-risk). Staff will be able to assist the prisoner in understanding when he or she will be eligible for TWP participation.

Eligibility does not ensure placement in the TWP as there are usually more prisoners eligible than there are jobs available. The Department makes every effort to place eligible prisoners in the program, though it may not be for the entire period of their eligibility.

For a list of TWP's throughout the state, visit <https://doc.louisiana.gov/transitional-work-program>.

Pre-Release Planning and Reentry

At DOC, we know that reentry preparation is critical to a prisoner's success. We have a myriad of programs to provide prisoners with appropriate tools that help prepare them for reintegration into the community. During imprisonment, DOC makes every effort to provide prisoners housed in both state and local facilities with Rehabilitative Programming such as anger management, substance abuse, parenting, and financial literacy. DOC also strives to provide all "High Risk" prisoners with Cognitive Behavioral Intervention Therapy.

During the last six months to one year of a person's incarceration, it is crucial that they receive adequate transitional planning to minimize risks, such as homelessness, unemployment, inability to afford medical care, and lack of transportation. We have also integrated programs to encourage family reunification in hopes of establishing a positive support system prior to the release. All of these things are covered in the **100-hour Pre-release Curriculum**.

- The 100 Hour Pre-Release programming includes the following modules: Job Placement Assistance, Counseling on Individual Community Reentry Concerns, Anger Management, Money Management Skills, Victim Awareness & Restitution, Problem Solving & Decision Making, Personal Development, Values Clarification, Goal Setting & Achieving, Employment Skills, and Reentry Support Services.
- After completion of this program, prisoners will have received the following: Valid Identification Documents (State Identification Card, Social Security Card, and Birth Certificate), Medicaid Enrollment, and will have worked with case management to establish a Reentry Accountability Plan that is shared with Probation and Parole to provide a continuum of services upon release.

NOTE: All persons being released from a state facility receive the above 100 Hour Pre-Release programming. DOC, in partnership with certain sheriffs, created nine (9) regional reentry centers at local facilities across the state. Combined, these reentry centers provide approximately 7000 persons releasing from local jails with the 100 Hour Pre-Release Curriculum. Prisoners are placed in the region of the parish to which they are returning. The reinvestment goal in the next 5 -10 years is to create additional local level reentry centers so that all prisoners releasing from local jails receive the 100 Hour Pre-Release Curriculum.

Through the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, DOC has also partnered with certain local organizations to provide transitional support services (housing, employment, case management, healthcare) in some of the larger parishes for prisoners after they release.

For more information on this, visit

<https://www.doc.louisiana.gov/louisiana-justice-reinvestment-package>.

On the following page is a map of the Reentry centers:

Louisiana Regional Map with State Correctional Facilities and Reentry Centers



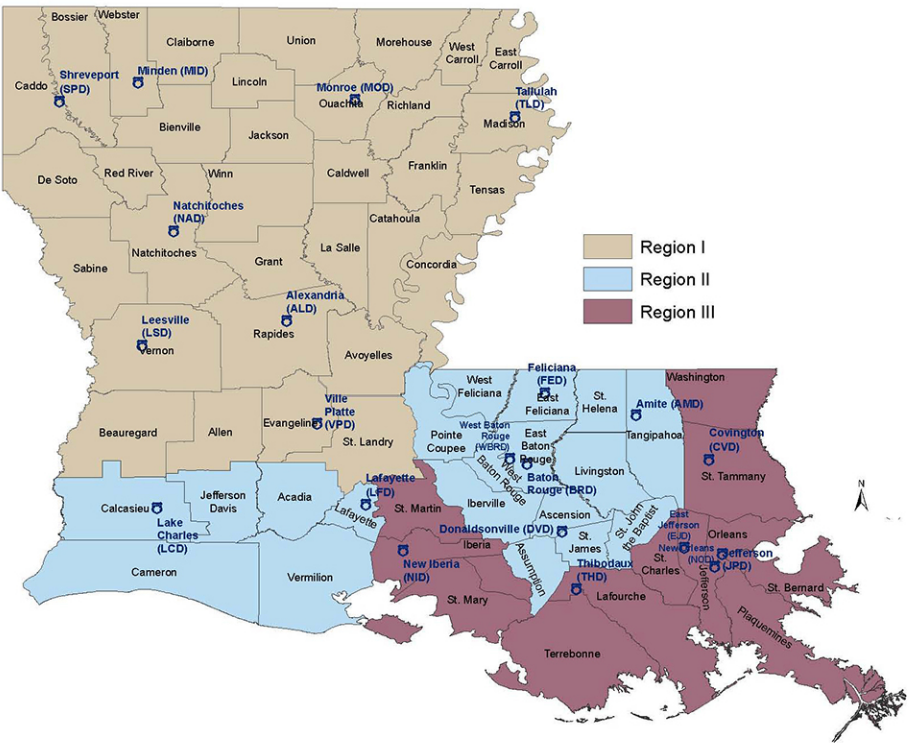
Probation & Parole

The Division of Probation and Parole functions as a community services/supervision division. It is comprised of twenty district offices located throughout the state and a Headquarters office in Baton Rouge. Probation and Parole Officers are POST (Peace Officer Standards Training) certified and supervise adult prisoners who are released to the community on probation, parole, diminution of sentence, home incarceration, medical furlough/parole, or supervised release. Officers also supervise prisoners who relocate to Louisiana from other states.

The main goal of P&P officers is public safety, so continued health and successful reentry is key. While on parole, an individual is supervised by a P&P officer. The individual must follow certain conditions to be afforded with this privilege, and any deviation from the restrictions could result in immediate re-imprisonment. The P&P officer's objective is to keep the individual with their families once they release. To do so, officers ensure those on supervision abide by the conditions of supervision, identify problems and solutions, make appropriate referrals, provide general counseling, and perform arrests as needed to protect public safety. Officers perform their duties by visiting prisoners primarily in their homes, at work, other places in the community, and in the office. The Division is actively involved in the Department's efforts to reduce recidivism through a variety of alternatives to imprisonment or re-imprisonment, such as Administrative Sanctions and Day Reporting Centers.

Officers in the Division also provide investigative services to decision-makers in the criminal justice system, including Judges, the Pardon Board and Committee on Parole, and the governor's office. They also oversee the collection of victim restitution, supervision fees, and a variety of criminal justice fees.

Probation and Parole District Offices



Louis Stacks

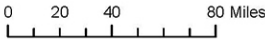
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(504) 568-8756



Date: 9/17/2018

Board of Pardons & Parole

The Board of Pardons & Parole is a combined entity that is made up of both the Pardon Board and the Parole Committee. All members of the Board are appointed by the governor and are subject to confirmation by the Louisiana Senate. There are five members of the Board of Pardons. The Committee on Parole, a committee within the Board of Pardons, is composed of the five members of the Board of Pardons and two at-large members, all of whom are appointed by the governor. The at-large members serve only as members of the Committee on Parole and do not serve as members of the Board of Pardons.

In addition to the appointed members, there is an ex-officio member of the Board. The warden or deputy warden of the correctional facility in which the prisoner is incarcerated serves as the ex-officio member. The ex-officio member is not a voting member nor is he counted for the purposes of the members necessary to take Board action.

Members appointed by the Governor must have at least five years of experience in the field of penology, corrections, law enforcement, sociology, law, education, social work, medicine, or a combination thereof. Appointed members are also required to complete a comprehensive orientation training program within 90 days of their appointment and 8 hours of in-service training annually. Training components include, but are not limited to, the elements of the decision-making process through the use of evidence-based practices for determining prisoner risk, needs, and motivation to change; dynamics of criminal victimization; and security classifications.

The Committee on Parole determines cases pertaining to parole release while the Board of Pardons determines cases related to Clemency.

What is Parole?

Parole is the early supervised release of an incarcerated individual on the promise of good behavior, allowing them to serve the latter portion of his or her sentence within the community. While on parole, an individual is supervised by a Probation & Parole officer. The individual must follow certain conditions to be afforded with this privilege, and any deviation from the restrictions could result in immediate re-imprisonment.

What is the parole process?

The Louisiana Committee on Parole is responsible for granting parole to a prisoner. Prisoners who are, by law, eligible for parole are automatically scheduled for a parole hearing six to nine months prior to their "parole eligibility date" (PED). A prisoner's PED is generally the earliest possible date they can be released, based on their sentence. Just because a prisoner is considered for parole does not mean that parole privileges will be granted. The Committee on Parole will determine whether prisoners are suitable for parole. Eligibility means that the prisoner has met all the requirements to obtain a hearing.

In general, under Louisiana laws, a person convicted of a non-violent offense is eligible to be considered by the Committee after serving at least 25% of the sentence imposed. In general, persons convicted of some violent offenses are eligible to be considered by the Committee after serving at least 75% of the sentence imposed. Refer to the Louisiana Revised Statutes for specifics.

What is a parole hearing?

A parole hearing is a hearing to determine whether a prisoner should be released onto parole. When the Committee on Parole meets, much evidence is gathered and taken into consideration. The Committee will consider the following:

- The prisoner's release plan
- The prisoner's case record: disciplinary reports, prison work history, and criminal history
- Rehabilitative and educational programs or counseling sessions the prisoner participated in
- Victim's Impact Statements, if provided
- Nature and circumstances of crime
- Prior criminal history
- Character, social background, emotional and physical condition
- Police, judicial, and community attitudes towards your possible release

The meetings, or parole panel hearings, are open meetings in accordance with Louisiana's open meeting laws. As such, other people are permitted to attend the parole hearing, including the victim and his or her family.

Many prisoners have several parole hearings before they are found suitable for parole release. If denied, they are allowed to write to the Committee on Parole to request that they be scheduled for another hearing. They can be denied parole for up to two years at a time.

For more information about parole hearings, refer to the Parole Hearing Handbook on the DOC website, <https://doc.louisiana.gov/media/1/parole-hearing-handbook.pdf>.

What is Clemency?

The Louisiana Constitution grants the governor the power of executive clemency, which allows him/her to pardon state criminal offenses or commute the sentence of people with state criminal convictions to a lesser sentence. The governor can grant clemency to show mercy to an individual, address a specific injustice, or correct disproportionate punishment of an entire class of prisoners. This power is completely discretionary and is often viewed as an extraordinary and exceptional remedy.

The Clemency request process includes several steps. First, a person must submit a completed application for Clemency to the Board of Pardons. The Board of Pardons reviews all submitted applications and makes a determination whether or not to grant the applicant a hearing. Persons granted a hearing may or may not receive a favorable recommendation for clemency from the Board. If the Board grants a person a favorable recommendation for clemency, the recommendation is forwarded to the governor for final action. The governor may decide to grant, deny, or take no action on the Board's recommendation. There are no time requirements on the governor to make this decision.

Application for Clemency can be found at

[https://www.doc.louisiana.gov/public-info/clemency-application-form.](https://www.doc.louisiana.gov/public-info/clemency-application-form)

There are two types of clemency requests: a pardon and a commutation of sentence.

- **Pardon**

Pardons occur post-incarceration. To apply for one, an individual must have completed their sentence and be free of any fines or court costs. A governor's pardon forgives a person for a crime and restores their civil rights, including the right to bear arms.

- **Commutation**

Commutations occur during imprisonment. A commutation of sentence reduces the individual's sentence to allow for early release or immediate release. Immediate release occurs if the prisoner has already served the length of the commuted (shortened) sentence. To apply, an individual must be write-up free for 24 months prior to the application and must not receive a disciplinary report throughout the process.

Victims Services

Mission Statement

The mission of the Crime Victims Services Bureau and agency staff is to mitigate the negative experience of victimization. Victims Services pledges the following:

- To provide accurate and timely information and clear explanations
- To handle inquiries and requests with courtesy, kindness, and respect
- To offer victims and victim support organizations the opportunity to influence agency programming in ways meaningful to them

For more information or assistance, please contact Crime Victims Services Bureau Director Gail Guerin at 225-342-1056, or toll free at 1-888-342-6110, or via email at gailguerin@corrections.state.la.us.

Overview

The Department recognizes that victims must not be forgotten. As such, the Crime Victims Services Bureau ensures that victims of crime and their family members are kept informed about relevant and pressing information, including possible release from custody, hearings, and successful court appeals. In addition, Victims Services offers the following programs and services: victim-offender dialogue; accountability letter; accompaniment to Pardon and Parole Board Hearings; assistance with victim impact and reentry statements; and victim programming for offenders.

Louisiana Automated Victim Notification System (LAVNS) is also available, which offers access to a state prisoner's location by internet (www.vinelink.com) and a 24-hour, toll-free telephone number (866-528-6748). You may be able to use LAVNS for information regarding a prisoner's current custody and case status, unless and until the prisoner is sentenced to the custody of the state.

In order for victims or a designated family member to be eligible to receive notices and exercise the rights provided by law, the victim or designated member must complete the Louisiana Victim Notice & Registration Form, found here:

<https://www.ladaa.org/uploads/File/LA%20Victim%20Notice%20and%20Registration%20Form.pdf/>.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why aren't all DOC prisoners housed in state facilities?

Please refer to Institutional Operations, #5 of this Handbook (p.24).

2. Where are the female prisoners being housed since their facility, LCIW, flooded in 2016?

Due to the August 2016 flooding in South Louisiana, LCIW is undergoing repairs and restoration. During the renovation, the prisoners usually housed at LCIW are in one of three facilities: the former Jetson Center for Youth, Louisiana State Penitentiary (Angola), and Elayn Hunt Correctional Center.

3. Does the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections have rules for prisoners and how are those rules communicated to them?

Please refer to Institutional Operations, #1 of this Handbook (p.23).

4. How does a prisoner file a grievance about a particular issue?

Please refer to Institutional Operations, #4 of this Handbook (p.24).

5. How can a prisoner be transferred to another facility?

Written transfer requests should be initiated by the prisoner to the Warden of the facility at which he/she is assigned. The request should include specific explanations for the transfer. When prisoners are moved into state operated facilities, they are usually first processed through reception centers before being assigned to a permanent location. Headquarters does not get involved in specific transfer requests, as assignments are coordinated through the appropriate classification process at the assigning facility or local jail.

6. How can I obtain a prisoner's release date?

If a prisoner's release date has been calculated, you can contact the Department's automated system at 225-383-4580 with the prisoner's name and either his/her date of birth or DOC number to find out his/her release date, facility or P&P District Office to which he/she is assigned, and contact information for those locations. If there is no date available on this system, the time calculation has not been completed yet and callers are encouraged to call again later. This system is automatically updated and will have the information as soon as it is available. If a person has recently been sentenced to DOC custody, the Department has to receive official paperwork from the sentencing court to calculate the prisoner's release date. For additional information on time computation related issues, you can call our automated system at 225-342-0799.

7. What if the prisoner disagrees with the time computation used to determine a release date?

Every prisoner is sent a copy of his or her Master Prison Record document reflecting the calculation of their sentence when the calculation is complete. If there are questions about time computation, prisoners housed in state facilities should write the Records Office at his/her assigned facility. For prisoners housed in local facilities, they may submit his/her questions in writing following the Administrative Remedy Process. While prisoners often ask family members or friends to contact the Office of Adult Services on their behalf about time computation questions, the prisoner should be encouraged to follow appropriate procedures to ensure that staff has the information and time needed to respond to his or her concerns.

8. What does it mean to have a “Life Sentence” in Louisiana?

Louisiana law allows for life sentences for convictions of 1st and 2nd degree murder as well as certain other crimes. Life sentences imposed for 1st and 2nd degree murder do not allow for possibility of parole. (Exception applies to certain persons convicted in 1970's for second degree murder when law at the time allowed for parole consideration.) In general, persons given life sentences for distribution of heroine are eligible for consideration of parole after the person has served 15 years. For more information see LA.R.S. 15:574.4.

9. Is a juvenile with a life sentence eligible for consideration for parole?

Louisiana law allows for a juvenile to receive a life sentence for a conviction of 1st or second degree murder as well as other crimes. Juveniles convicted of first or second degree murder in general are eligible for consideration for parole after serving 25 years and completing certain general educational and disciplinary free requirements. For certain extreme cases, the law allows for the possibility of life without parole for those convicted of 1st or 2nd degree murder, a decision which is made by the judge and prosecutor post sentencing. Juveniles who receive a life sentence for crimes other than 1st or 2nd degree murder are eligible for consideration for parole after serving 25 years and completing certain general educational and disciplinary free requirements. For more information, see LA. R.S. 15.574.4D.

10. Can prisoners earn credit for participation in certain educational or rehabilitative programs?

Yes. Please refer to the *Programs* section of this handbook, p. (13-15).

11. How does a prisoner sign up for educational and rehabilitative programs?

Prisoners do not need to sign up for classes. Every prisoner is tested using the TABE, Test of Adult Basic Education. If they do not have a high school diploma or GED, they are typically put on the wait list for a class. However, prisoners may request to be in a program by filling out an Educational Request form at the state level. In addition, and especially at the local level, prisoners may write the educational coordinator at their facility.

12. What are the Department's procedures for allowing prisoners to make phone calls?

Please refer to *Staying In Touch, Telephone Communication* section of this Handbook (p.16-17).

13. What are the rules for visiting prisoners?

Please refer to the *Visitation* section of this Handbook (p.20-22).

14. How are disciplinary matters handled as it relates to prisoners? What about their right to appeal?

Prisoners are put on notice about how the disciplinary process works while incarcerated and the procedures are outlined in the rulebook. They are also advised of their right to appeal at the time of a disciplinary hearing and the appeal must be submitted to the facility at which the hearing occurred. Any issues regarding disciplinary matters should be handled through these procedures. A prisoner who needs help understanding these procedures may ask staff at the facility where he or she is housed.

15. Can prisoners receive mail from family and friends?

Yes, prisoners can receive mail. Family and friends are allowed to send correspondence (letters). These must be addressed to the facility in which the prisoner is housed and must include the prisoner's name and DOC number on the envelope. Do not send cash or stamps through the mail or photographs that have a hardback. Please note that these particular items will be rejected and cash will be confiscated.

16. Can prisoners receive packages from family and friends?

Not directly. Prisoners are not allowed to receive packages, publications, greeting cards, or post cards directly from their families. Prisoners may only receive packages through Union Supply Direct, the approved package vendor for the Department. Family, friends, and prisoners may purchase packages through their website: www.LAinmatepackage.com. Please note that there are restrictive ordering periods; visit their website for more information.

17. Can I send money to a prisoner?

Yes. Please refer to the *Staying in Touch, Sending Money* section of this Handbook for more information (p.18-19).

18. How can I access hearing schedules for the Board of Pardons and Parole?

Pardon Board and Committee on Parole hearing information can be found at <http://doc.louisiana.gov/louisiana-board-of-pardons-and-parole/>

19. How can I check on the medical/mental health of a prisoner?

Due to confidentiality, release of medical/mental health information is strictly governed by regulation. If you are inquiring about a specific prisoner and are not authorized by regulation to access this information, appropriate release of information forms must be on file and then only authorized staff members may discuss this information with you. In these cases, you should contact the facility where the prisoner is housed. Please be aware that even in instances where one is authorized to access this information, only general information will be shared over the phone.

Prisoners are oriented on how to access the medical staff 24/7 at the facility where he/she is housed through established sick call procedures. In serious medical situations, any staff member will assist a prisoner in obtaining medical treatment. Medical staff will make a determination about his/her treatment.

20. How can I report suspected abuse or mistreatment of a prisoner?

Serious concerns of abuse or mistreatment should be directed to the Warden of the facility where the prisoner is housed.

21. How can I obtain demographic information on Louisiana's prison population?

Please visit the "Statistics" section of the DOC website: <https://doc.louisiana.gov/>.

22. Does the Department allow the purchase of inmate records?

No. Under Louisiana law, particularly the provisions of R.S. 15:574.12, the records of prisoners (past, present or future), in the custody of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, Corrections Services is confidential and cannot be disclosed, directly or indirectly, to anyone. This is not to say that some information, in the hands of another state agency or subdivision of the state, is not available. However, pursuant to state law, while held by this Department, that information is confidential. Consequently, we are unable to accommodate any request for any kind of data sharing on any terms.

23. How do I apply for the restoration of firearm rights?

A governor's Pardon is the only mechanism that can restore previously lost firearm rights. More information on the clemency application process can be found on the Louisiana Board of Pardons and Parole page on the DOC website: <https://doc.louisiana.gov/>.

24. What is the difference between Probation and Parole?

Both parole and probation are forms of supervision under Probation & Parole officers. Probation is a type of penalty imposed by a judge and usually used as an alternative to imprisonment; parole, on the other hand, is a status with required supervision that occurs after a person is released from prison. The ultimate governing authority for those on probation is the sentencing judge while the ultimate governing authority for those on parole is the Committee on Parole.

25. How do I apply for the restoration of voting rights?

Louisiana law prohibits certain persons from registering to vote/and or voting, including persons convicted of a felony and currently in prison. Persons convicted of a felony and currently on parole supervision are prohibited from registering to vote/and or voting until they have successfully completed five (5) consecutive years on supervision. Eligible persons must register to vote or apply for reinstatement through the Registrar of Voters and must also obtain a Voting Rights Certification Form from their local Probation and Parole District Office.

To register to vote or apply for reinstatement, visit the Louisiana Secretary of State website: www.sos.la.gov.

Terms and Definitions

Administrative Sanctions: Intermediate penalties (jail or non-jail) used for various violations committed by a person on probation or parole in lieu of returning to prison. These sanctions are enforced by the Probation and Parole Division.

Basic Jail Guidelines (BJG): Established in collaboration between the Department of Public Safety and Corrections and the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, these are the minimum conditions necessary to ensure the safe, efficient, effective and legal operation of a jail facility. The BJG serves as the basis for evaluating Louisiana jails to ensure adherence to these operational guidelines. Facilities that do not agree to the BJG, or who fail to maintain certification of BJG compliance by the DPS&C, are not allowed to house state offenders for periods extending 30 days after the offender's sentencing date.

Classification: A process for determining the needs and requirements of those for whom confinement has been ordered and for assignment to appropriate housing units and programs.

Crime Victims Services Bureau (CVSB): A Division within the DOC to offer crime victims easy access to information and registration. See the CVSB webpage for more information <http://www.doc.la.gov/pages/victim-services/>.

Criminogenic Needs: Needs that must be addressed to mitigate criminogenic risk

Criminogenic Risk: risk factors that research shows increase a prisoner's likelihood of recidivating and returning to incarceration

Custody Level: The type of housing and the level of supervision required for a prisoner. Custody assignments shall reflect public safety as the first priority, staff and offender safety within the institution as the second priority and finally, institutional or offender needs. Other factors will also be considered in all classification decisions.

Day Reporting Centers: : A Community-based correctional treatment program for individuals on Probation or Parole. The program provides participants with additional skills and tools necessary to successfully maintain separation from the criminal justice system. Participants can receive education, substance abuse treatment, individual and group work, employment, anger management, and a variety of other wrap-around services.

Diminution of Sentence: a reduction of sentence earned by good behavior or self-improvement activities, or both; known as "Good Time." Prisoners released on diminution of sentence are released under "Good Time parole supervision" (GTPS).

Terms and Definitions cont'd

Full-Term Sentence Completion/Release: Certain crimes do not allow for any type of parole eligibility or Good Time and thus require that a person serve the entirety of the sentence imposed in prison. Upon the completion of the “full-term” of the sentence, a person is released. No additional supervision is imposed after release.

Goodtime Parole (GTP): Also known as Release due to Diminution of Sentence, GTP is release from prison based on laws that allow prisoners to earn credit for positive actions while in prison. This type of release is granted once a prisoner serves the time required by law—the person must then serve out the remainder of their sentence on parole supervision until the full-term completion.

High Risk: A classification designation for a prisoner that is based upon the prisoner’s score in the Department’s validated Risk/Needs Assessment tool.

Medical Parole: a specific type of parole for certain eligible prisoners who, because of a medical condition, are determined by the Committee on Parole to be a permanently disabled prisoner or terminally ill prisoner. Medical parole consideration shall be in addition to any other parole for which a prisoner may be eligible.

Parole Board Release: is a release from prison by action of the Committee on Parole. If granted, a prisoner is released onto parole supervision under the Division of Probation and Parole until the full-term completion of the sentence.

Parole Eligibility Date (PE Date): the earliest date the prisoner is eligible for parole release. This type of release is discretionary. The release date is only valid if the parole is first granted by the Committee on Parole.

Parole: a term of early release granted by the Committee on Parole from physical custody to parole supervision.

Parolee: any person under the Department’s supervision who has been granted parole, medical parole, or medical treatment furlough by the Committee on Parole; or any person under the Department’s supervision who has been released on good time parole supervision or Administrative Parole.

Reception Diagnostic Center (RDC): to the extent possible, DOC provides a standardized admissions procedure to foster consistency in processing new commitments who are transferred to the Department’s custody. Each prisoner is evaluated, tested, and interviewed. The offender’s security level, custody level, and risk need assessment shall determine the offender’s permanent facility assignment in accordance with Department Regulation No. B-02-001.

Terms and Definitions cont'd

Reentry: the process of transitioning a prisoner back into the community from imprisonment, probation, or parole supervision.

Restitution: in the criminal justice system this term means payment by an offender to the victim for the harm caused by the offender's wrongful acts. Courts have the authority to order convicted offenders to pay restitution to victims as part of their sentences.

Victim Impact Statement: a statement that describes the emotional, physical, and/or spiritual impact a crime has on the victim, the victim's family, and/or the community.

Violation: any behavior, action, or inaction that goes against the conditions of supervision.

Voting Rights Certification: a signed document that is embossed with the DPS&C seal, issued by DPS&C to a person, which certifies that the person is not or no longer under an order of imprisonment for a conviction of a felony, or that the person is under an order of imprisonment for a felony but has not been incarcerated within the last five years pursuant to that order, and is not under an order of imprisonment for election fraud or any other election prisoner pursuant to R.S. 18:1461.2.

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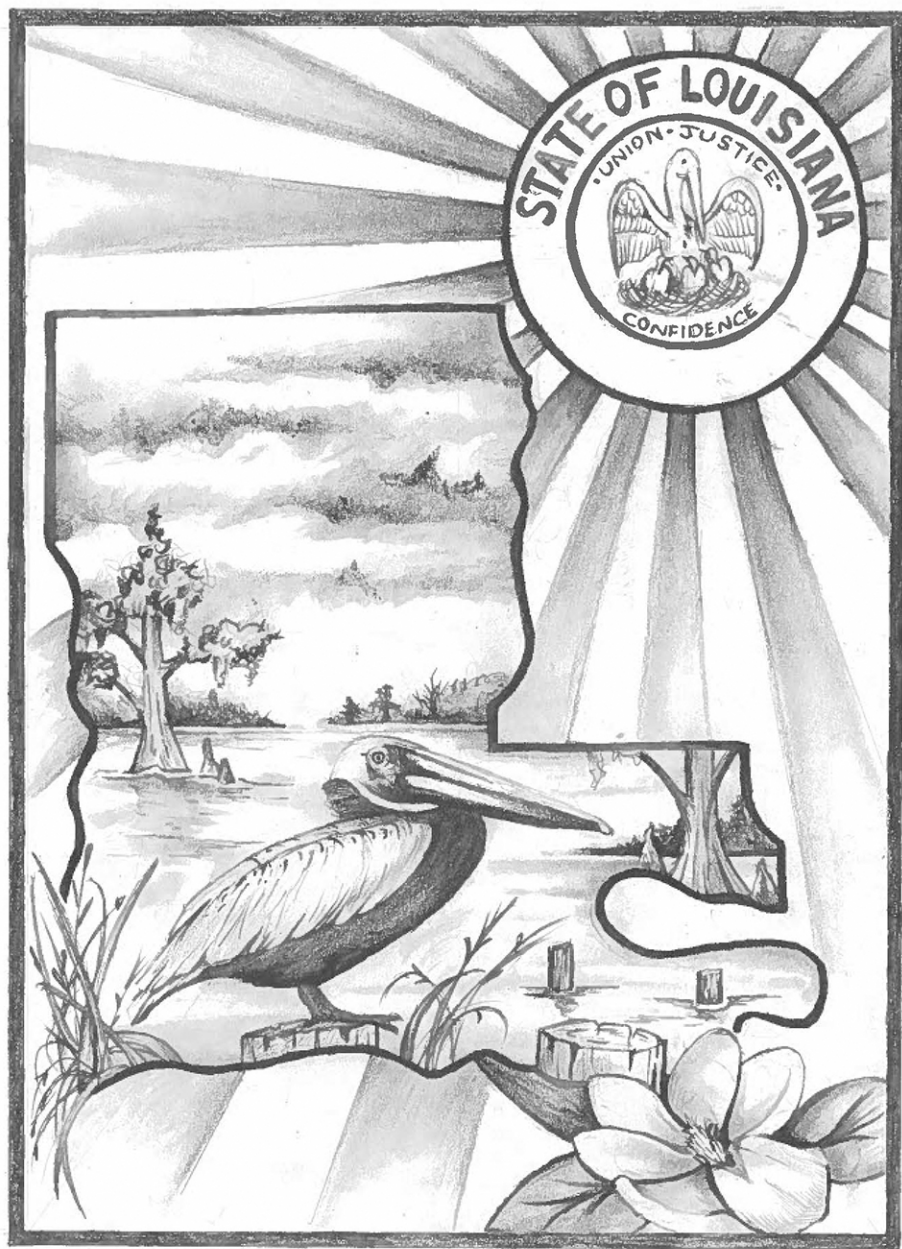
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LA Informational Handbook for Friends and Families of People in Prison