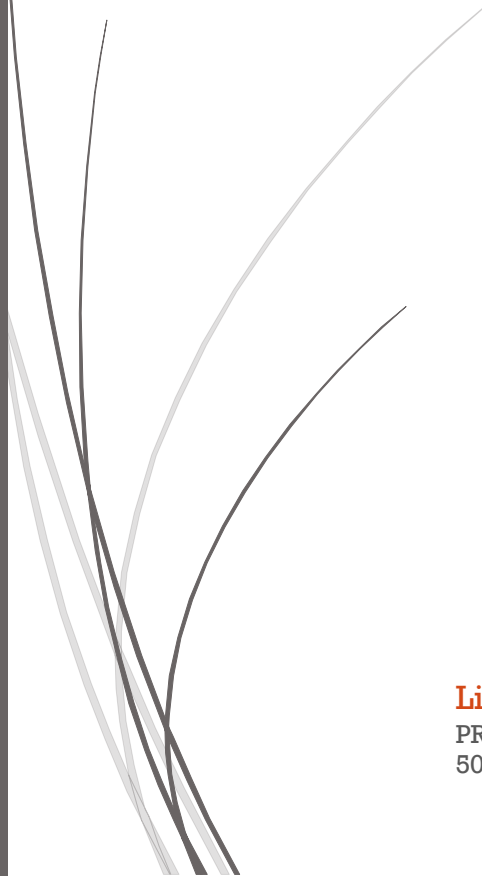




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Native American Programs & Services —

August 2021



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Native American Programs & Services

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ABOUT

The Department of Corrections believes strongly and firmly in building and maintaining strong government-to-government relationships with the Indian tribes of Washington State. Part of this is sharing Department programs and activities that are occurring to develop transparent and meaningful partnerships with our tribal leaders and families of our incarcerated individuals. In doing so we hope to reflect our commitment to providing spiritual and cultural growth for Native Americans within our prisons and reentry centers through respectful and inclusive interactions.

OVERVIEW

During the month of August 2021, each facility provided vaccinated incarcerated individuals in Native American programs the opportunity to enter the inipi without masks during at least one sweat lodge ceremony. The exception to the sweat lodge provision was Mission Creek Corrections Center for Women due to contractor illness and a COVID outbreak, which prevented rescheduling. Individuals who chose to remain unvaccinated were not allowed within the sweat lodges yet were able to participate in singing, drumming and modified pipe ceremony in the sweat lodge grounds with masks and social distancing required. The number of services provided were contingent based upon:

- Size of the Circle (number of participants)
 - Number of vaccinated
 - Number of unvaccinated
- Size of lodge area
- Contractor availability
- Staff resources (where contractors were not available)
- Services requested by Native Circles
- COVID outbreaks
- Critical staffing operations

HEAL Contract

Winona Stevens, HEAL contract representative, continues to work with the department to identify subcontractor resources and facilitate onboarding working with Dawn Taylor and facility community partnership program coordinators. Ms. Stevens has also covered some services where there is a lack of available subcontractor. Currently, the following facilities/units are without an assigned contractor:

- Airway Heights Corrections Center MAIN
- Airway Heights Corrections Center MSU
- Clallam Bay Corrections Center
- Coyote Ridge Corrections Center – MAIN
- Coyote Ridge Corrections Center – MSU
- Mission Creek Corrections Center for Women (temporary illness)
- Olympic Corrections Center
- Stafford Creek Corrections Center
- Washington State Penitentiary - BAR
- Washington State Penitentiary – Close
- Washington State Penitentiary – MSU

Site Visits

During the month of August and in the early weeks of September, Ms. Taylor launched site visits to meet with individuals from the Native American population participating in programs. The purpose of the visits was to provide information on how department decisions are made regarding their programs and how the agency continues to work with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Department of Health (DOH), Indian Health Services, and Ms. Stevens as the current service contractor. These visits are continuing now until each facility has been visited. The following have been completed:

- Airway Heights Corrections Center
- Coyote Ridge Corrections Center
- Monroe Correctional Complex

It is important to note that one of the two Coyote Ridge Corrections Center Native Circles refused to participate in a discussion with Ms. Taylor during the site visit. Ms. Stevens was notified and made her own visit to meet with these individuals.

Native Circle Feedback for Event Planning

After gaining the understanding that the department does not unilaterally place restrictions on Native practices, much of the feedback received from the population indicated the individuals are pleased to know that the department is working to provide opportunities for them. After explaining that a traditional pow wow with family was not likely to occur during the duration of calendar year 2021 due to ongoing COVID outbreaks across the state, Ms. Taylor asked the Circle members what they would recommend so they could still have a meaningful gathering in lieu of the traditional pow wow.

Suggestions provided by the Circle members include:

1. The Circle to be able to come together.
 - a. Vaccinated vs. non-vaccinated not an issue as they are not entering inipi
 - b. If facilities are still separating by unit cohort, they could still come together and be separated by space (i.e., C cohort on one side, D cohort on other, etc.), as accomplished with other programs.
2. Event should be outdoors whenever possible.
 - a. Some request use of lodge area.
 - b. Some request yard area.
3. Record the event.
 - a. Gifting – the tribal members would be able to select an item and be recorded “gifting it” to their loved one.
 - b. The gifted items would be sent out to the loved ones with postage being paid by their group accounts.
 - c. Song
 - d. Dance
 - e. Drumming
4. Food
 - a. Would receive Native American pow wow menu (not mainline)
 - b. Be provided the opportunity to purchase salmon (on approved list)
 - c. Groups expressed understanding that the meal will need to be taken back to their units to consume to decrease possible virus exposure.

Currently, the department is pending a final decision from the Headquarters’ clinical team and emergency operations leadership to finalize direction for safe start event planning. The department expects a decision by or before the end of September after reviewing the newest COVID-19 data considering the increase in COVID cases occurring within the prisons.

Tentative dates have been established for facility events and are included in the *Native American Services – August 2021* spreadsheet.

Sweat Lodge Activities

The *Native American Services – August 2021* spreadsheet provides information regarding August 2021 activities for modified services and the approved inipi service for vaccinated individuals. Please note that there are Native Circles that have elected to stay together for modified activities and opt out of entering the inipi in a demonstration of unity. The department understands and respects their decision and continues to leave the opportunity to enter the inipi open for them.

Inipi Rebuilds

In 2021, the following sweat lodge rebuilds have been completed:

- Airway Heights Corrections Center May
- Clallam Bay Corrections Center July
- Larch Correction Center March
- Monroe Correctional Complex/SOU August
- Olympic Corrections Center August

The following sweat lodges do not require rebuilds this year:

- Coyote Ridge Corrections Center Main
- Monroe Correctional Complex TRU
- Monroe Correctional Complex WSR
- Monroe Correctional Complex MSU
- Mission Creek Corrections Center for Women
- Washington Corrections Center
- Washington Corrections Center for Women
- Washington State Penitentiary MSU
- Washington State Penitentiary Close
- Washington State Penitentiary BAR
- Washington State Penitentiary MSC

The following facilities will need to be scheduled for rebuilds:

- Airway Heights Corrections Center MSU
- Cedar Creek Corrections Center
- Coyote Ridge Corrections Center MSU
- Stafford Creek Corrections Center

Medicine Gardens

Moving into fall and expected weather, the Tribal Relations Office is using the fall/winter season to look at plans to expand in 2022 working with various tribes and stakeholders. The intent for the medicine garden program is to have a garden, varying in size and crop, in each of the state's 12 correctional facilities. The contents of each garden will be based on the green zones and growing season of the individual facilities.

The Tribal Relations Office continues to reach out to local tribes and educational institutions, asking for their support in both the start-up and continuation of each garden, as planning continues for the next planting season.

Contacts

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