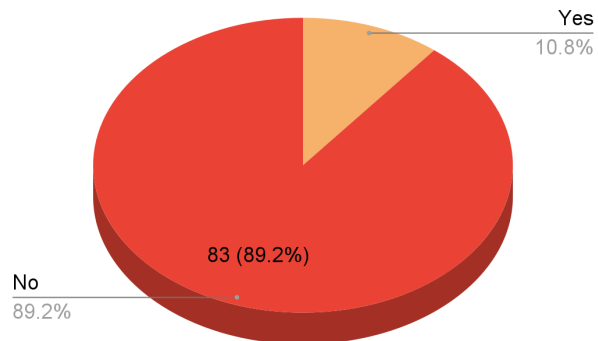


“Community Insights on California Jails” Survey Summary of Findings

The “Community Insights on California Jails” survey was developed to seek input from community members who have direct experience in California’s county jails. Between July 6, 2021 and August 5, 2021, 110 survey responses were submitted via Google Forms detailing conditions within California’s county jail facilities and recommending revisions to the Adult Titles 15 and 24 Regulations. All respondents were either formerly incarcerated in jail, have/had loved ones in jail, or worked as attorneys or service providers with these individuals. After accounting for four duplicate responses and seven ineligible (e.g., experience in juvenile hall or prison rather than jail), we analyzed survey submissions from 99 impacted community members.

Most respondents did not feel safe while in county jail.



During the biennial Title 15/24 regulations revisions process¹ by the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC), community-based organizations had serious concerns that the BSCC did not facilitate an accessible method for input from justice-involved people. This leaves many of the most critical voices out of a decision-making process that affects thousands. As a result, proposed revisions as of May 28, 2021 were extremely limited and would have resulted in little material change to the day-to-day lives of Californians in county jails.

This extensive survey elevates lived experiences of those best situated to describe current conditions in California’s jails and what improvements are necessary to protect all Californians. We request that the BSCC share these comments with the Adult Titles 15 and 24 Regulations Revision Executive Steering Committee (ESC). We ask the ESC to propose additional revisions after seriously considering these survey responses and recommendations.

Please note, given the limited timeframe² for public comment, this analysis does not include hard copies of the survey we sent to individuals currently in county jails. Additionally, the preliminary recommendations included in this summary are neither final nor exhaustive. We will continue to gather this important information as it becomes available and share it as soon as possible. While we worked diligently to accurately capture each respondent’s answer in this abbreviated summary, we recommend that readers review the complete survey spreadsheet.

We also acknowledge the survey’s limitations related to non-English speakers and lack of intentional outreach to LGBTQIA+ and disabled formerly incarcerated people. These people are overrepresented in the criminal legal system and face unique challenges in county jails. We believe this should be a priority for future outreach.

The following organizations developed and analyzed the survey: Anti-Recidivism Coalition (ARC), Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice (CJCJ), Legal Services for Prisoners with Children (LSPC), MILPA (Motivating Individual Leadership for Public Advancement), and Starting Over, Inc. Contact: Renee Menart at renee@cjcj.org or 1-415-621-5661 x. 103.

¹ For more information, visit <https://www.bscc.ca.gov/adult-titles-15-and-24-regulations-revision/>.

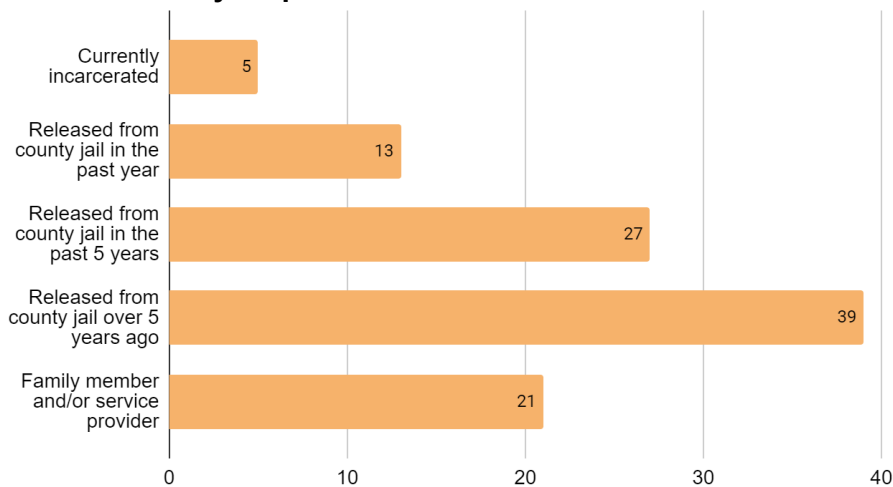
² At the Adult Titles 15 and 24 Regulations Revision Executive Steering Committee (ESC) meeting on May 28, 2021, members of the public requested a 4-month public comment period before the next ESC meeting to allow time for survey development, distribution, and analysis. This request accounted for estimated mailing delays regarding written submissions by people currently in jail. In response, the BSCC opened a 9-week public comment period.

SECTION OVERVIEW

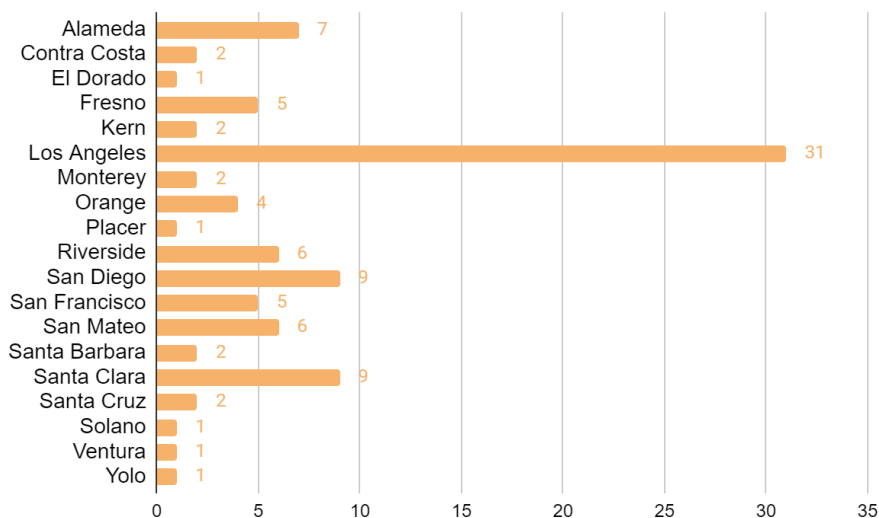
- Direct Experiences (page 2)
- Personal Hygiene (page 3)
- Nutrition (page 4)
- Cell Time & Isolation (page 5)
- Programming (page 7)
- Physical & Mental Health (page 8)
- Grievances (page 9)
- Family Engagement (page 11)
- Staff Use of Force & Safety (page 12)
- Reentry (page 14)
- Additional Statements (page 15)
- Additional Demographics (page 17)

DIRECT EXPERIENCES

All respondents either had direct experiences within California’s county jails, or submitted survey responses on behalf of a loved one/client.



Respondents experienced jail conditions in 19 California counties.



PERSONAL HYGIENE

While they were incarcerated in county jail, did they receive personal hygiene items needed to stay clean? For example: toothbrush, shampoo, razors, soap, cleaning products, deodorant, feminine pads and tampons (if applicable), access to showers and enough shower time, and other items. They also talked about the quality of the products they received.

- Yes - 47.37% (45)
- No - 52.63% (50)

While they were incarcerated in county jail, did they receive a clean mattress/sleeping pad, bed sheets, blankets, and clothing?

- Yes - 43.01% (40)
- No - 56.99% (53)

Was the county jail clean?

- Yes - 14.89% (14)
- No - 85.11% (80)

Key Takeaways:

- **Individuals described deeply disturbing conditions in California's jails.** Facilities are dirty and incarcerated persons are responsible for their upkeep. Respondents described unsanitary conditions with rodents, bugs, urine, and feces.
 - "I was in [*sic*] release tank for 16 hours with 8 other women while the toilet had a mound of feces and vomit extending above the rim and overflowing onto [the] floor. The sink was also clogged with vomit. There was no running water. We were told to pee into the drain. Many of us became ill and had to vomit onto [the] floor. Our meals were served next to piles of vomit and feces."
 - "They were sitting ducks and [my] loved one eventually contracted Covid and was extremely ill with it."
 - "Everything was disgusting."
 - "...there was feces all over the floor, poop stains on the walls."
 - "It was overcrowded and there was garbage in the cells. The floors were wretched. The toilet had dirty sanitary napkins stuck to it. No one came to clean out our cells, so food waste stunk. Once the guard opened the door and shouted at us that our cell smelled, but we literally had no garbage can or way to clean it. I smelled from not showering, having a change of clothes, socks, toothpaste/brush or deodorant."
- **Jails provided respondents with very limited and poor-quality hygiene products.** Often proper hygiene products were only available for purchase.
 - "I never did get a shower or any toiletries. I also never got blankets, socks, or a pillow. Eventually other women shared theirs with me. By the time I got out I was disgusting."

- **Individuals received unclean and torn bedding materials and clothing.** Their clothes were often dirty and ill-fitting. Some had thin or no mattresses. Respondents lacked toilet paper, cleaning materials, and/or masks to protect from COVID-19.
 - "The mats were never washed, the sheets and blankets were stained and smelled like mold, and the clothes also smelled musty and moldy."
 - "Most things were stained with other peoples blood, yellow from body odor, the mattresses were ripped open, stained and not cleaned, whoever was released would put their mattress on the railing and the new intakes would get those mattresses."
 - "My cell mate had MRSA infection. There were repeated lice outbreaks from bedding not being cleaned and cells being reassigned. Used underwear given out with stains and shredding elastic."
 - "The process of exchanging clothes was very demeaning. Everyone was forced to get completely naked and stand in line until the clean clothing was handed out by the correction officers. Sometimes they would purposely give you the wrong size of clothing."
- **Individuals lacked menstrual products and access to showers.**
 - "You have to practically bleed on yourself then run out of the dorm to go to the counter to ask for feminine pads in front of all the dorms and then run back to your dorms/restroom."
 - "If I needed more tampons or pads they would tell me I got my fair share even if I had a heavy menstrual."
 - "Lockdown lasted 16 days, no access to showers during that time."

Preliminary recommendations for regulation revisions related to personal hygiene:

- All issued bedding materials must be clean and intact.
- All issued clothing must be clean, and must be cleaned with reasonable frequency.
- All issued underwear must be new.
- Regulations should define "clean".

NUTRITION

Did they ever go to bed hungry because they did not have enough food?

- Yes - 81.91% (77)
- No - 18.09% (17)

Was the food they received a good source of nutrition? (i.e. a healthy balance of fruits, vegetables, grains, and meat)

- Yes - 10.64% (10)
- No - 89.36% (84)

Key takeaways:

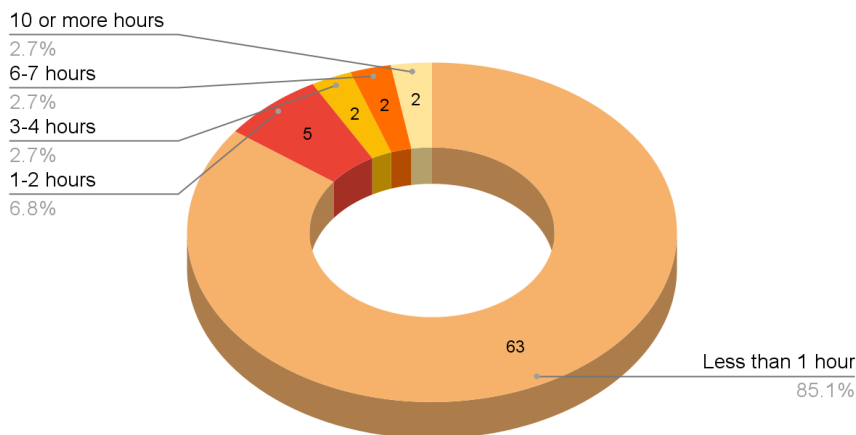
- **Portion sizes are too small for adults.**
 - “Portions are child size portions. I remember eating toilet paper and drinking water to try to make my belly full. It’s so sad the food is just not enough.”
- **Key food safety continues to pose a health risk for people who are incarcerated.**
 - “They do not give you enough portion food and some of their food (bread) has mold on it and the cops seem to think it’s cute and call it penicillin. They feed you early as hell in the morning , afternoon and dinner time and later on if you ain’t lucky to have commissary or money or family to put money on your books you starve during the rest of the evening.”
 - “The food was often inedible. The eggs were green and there was mold on the fruit. They found bugs in their food as well and sometimes felt ill after eating it. Instead, oftentimes, they’d skip meals.”
 - “Quality of food is poor, so much [so] that it is unrecognizable.”
- **Emphasis on carb and sodium-rich meals. leads to negative health outcomes.**
 - “Most of food was an empty carb- white bread/white rice. Processed meats, minimal vegetables, most often vegetables were canned or molded. High sodium level led to development of hypertension which had a negative effect on my pregnancy.”

Preliminary recommendations for regulation revisions related to nutrition:

- Use standards set forth by USDA [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#):
 - Healthy, wholesome, nutritious meals
 - 85 percent of calories needed to meet food group needs should be nutrient-dense.
 - Minimum standards should be set in accordance with caloric needs by demographic.
 - Tailored nutrition across the life span (ex: pregnant and elderly population)
- Include language in the regulations regarding the use of emergency rations when food is deemed unsafe (ex: mold, rotten)

CELL TIME & ISOLATION

How much time did they spend out of their cell on a usual day?



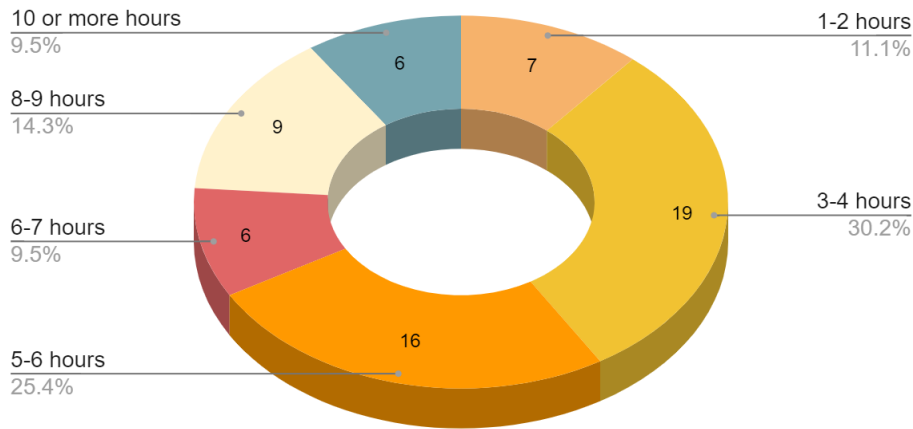
Note: Some other factors noted by respondents that affected out of cell time included repeated solitary confinement,

varied work placements, and frequent lockdowns.

Did this amount of time out of their cell feel sufficient for their physical, mental, and emotional health?

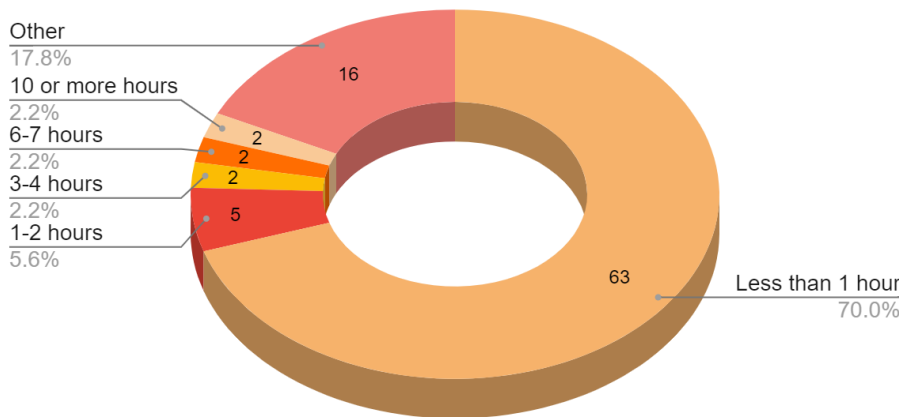
- Yes - 7.87% (7)
- No - 92.13% (82)

If they responded No, how much time would they need out of their cell to attend to their needs on a usual day? For example: phone calls with loved ones, showers, visiting commissary, yard time, time for exercise, etc.



Of the respondents that stated a recommendation, **88.89% expressed they would need 3 or more hours to attend to their basic needs.** This includes 58.73% who expressed needs over 5 hours (ranging from 5-6 to 10 or more hours).

How much time did they spend outdoors on a usual day? For example: on the rec yard or other locations outside of buildings.



Note: Many of the responses included in the "Less than 1 hour" per day category were, in fact, far fewer. Some responses expressed rarely if ever going outside, while others said they had limited yard time on a weekly or every other week basis.

Did this amount of time outdoors feel sufficient for their physical, mental, and emotional health?

- Yes - 10.11% (9)
- No - 89.89% (80)

Have they ever been placed in solitary confinement? Solitary confinement may include being temporarily held in isolation, or a longer term placement. If yes, please describe the reason, duration, frequency, and/or conditions of the room.

- Yes - 52.17% (48)
- No - 47.83% (44)

If so, did they feel like this was a reasonable response to their situation?

- Yes - 2.08% (1)
- No - 97.92% (47)

Key Takeaways:

- “The lack of space and in-cell housing limits movement and programming which creates a more dangerous and volatile environment.”
- “Caging someone under current conditions of any local, state, or federal cage in the U.S is not healthy in any way[,] shape of [sic] form.”

Preliminary recommendations for regulation revisions related to cell time and isolation:

- § 1065. Out of Cell Time
- (1) “An exercise program, in an area designed for exercise, which will allow a minimum of ~~three~~ seven hours of exercise distributed over a period of seven days.”
- (2) “a recreation program, which will allow an opportunity for ~~seven~~ a minimum of three hours of recreational, or out of cell time, ~~per day distributed over a period of seven days.~~”
- (c) “The facility administrator of a Type I facility shall make table games, radio/streaming, and television, ~~or both~~, available to inmates.

PROGRAMMING

Are there any activities or programs unavailable to them they would have wanted to do?

The list below compiles many key takeaways from responses. Many people noted they did not have access to any programming (e.g., “The only thing that was offered was television.”) Additionally, respondents noted they did not receive information on available programs.

Mental and Physical Health

- More social workers, counselors, and therapists
- Mental health support programs
- Access to medication (concerns ranged from ibuprofen to diabetic needs)
- Access to doctors (one respondent was unable to see doctor during pregnancy)
- Exercise equipment (indoor access) and more time at the gym
- Running, basketball, yoga

Legal Support

- Pro bono representation
- Legal assistance
- Resource center inside where people vested in the community can serve
- Law library

Education

- Pencils and paper available to people (one respondent notes that journaling was their release, but the costs of 1.5” pencils makes it inaccessible)
- GED programs; study spaces (one respondent recalls studying in the celly port)
- Adequate educational/college courses
- Access to library and books
- Culturally relevant programs
- Restorative justice programs
- Access to music
- Arts programs

Spirituality

- Healing-informed programs
- Spiritual counseling
- Access to church (cancelled or not available to people in certain units)

Reentry

- Improved vocational opportunities
- Housing resources in all units
- Life skills workshops and self-help groups

PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH

Were they able to go to the doctor/nurse/physical therapist when they needed to?

- Yes - 22.73% (20)
- No - 77.27% (68)

Key Takeaways:

- Untimely responses: “It takes months to get called.”
- Misprescription/misdiagnoses
- Inadequate care

Were they able to see a psychologist/counselor/therapist when they needed to?

- Yes - 15.29% (13)
- No - 84.71% (72)

Were they able to get the health treatment they needed in a timely manner? For example, medications, mobility aids, medical procedures, HIV therapy, hormone therapy, or other health accommodations.

- Yes - 11.63% (10)
- No - 88.37% (76)

Key Takeaways:

- **Denial of medication and resources is common.**
 - “was denied medication and treatment for chronic conditions: HTN, thyroid disease and asthma.”

- “I was sent to the nurse who told me that i was lying about my condition, made me bring proof of how much i was bleeding by giving me extra sanitary napkins and keeping them in a brown paper bag.”

If they were in county jail during the COVID-19 pandemic (since March 2020):

Were the COVID-19 precautions at their facility sufficient to maintain a safe and healthy environment?

- Yes - 11.36% (5)
- No - 88.64% (39)

Did they receive information regarding the COVID-19 virus, precautions, and/or vaccines?

- Yes - 18.92% (7)
- No - 81.08% (30)

Key Takeaways:

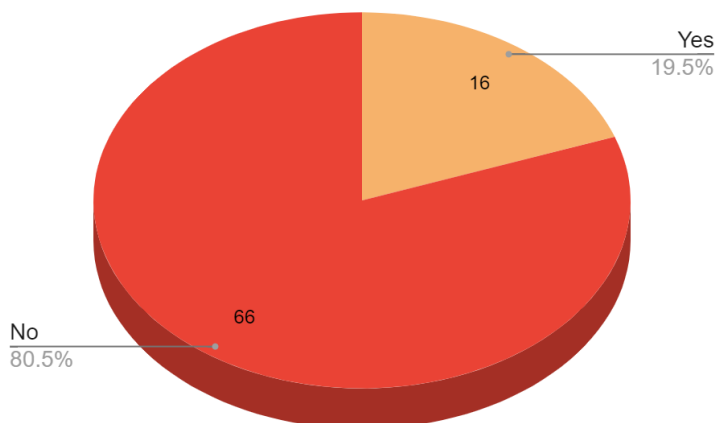
- Noncompliance with social distancing
- Lack of PPE
- Lack of education regarding COVID vaccine

Recommendations for regulation revisions related to physical & mental health:

- § 1206. Health Care Procedures Manual
 - Strengthen language to include the maximum amount of time a patient will wait to receive medical care
- § 1208. Access to Treatment
 - Include language to include the maximum amount of time a patient will wait to receive medical care

GRIEVANCES

If they had a problem with a staff person or another incarcerated person, was there someone they could report it to who would correct the problem?



Key Takeaways:

- **People don't feel comfortable reporting problems to staff members.** Fear of retaliation makes it extremely difficult for incarcerated individuals to engage in the reporting process.
 - "I do remember filing a grivence [sic] on a guard who beat someone in a open dorm while sleep and the greivance [sic] disappeared."
 - "Staff is hard to come by to even talk to[.] they rather ignore you or side with their colleagues."
 - "the guards and staff were very unhelpful and rude."
- **Non-english speakers lack translation access in the grievance process.**
- "I witnessed a lot of non english speakers experience trouble and embarrassment while trying to advocate for themselves."

Have they ever filed a grievance?

- Yes - 44.94% (40)
- No - 55.06% (49)

Key Takeaways:

- **Of the respondents that had filed a grievance, 77.50% (31 out of 40) reported the problem was not fixed.**
 - Reported grievances included: physical abuse by staff, bribery by staff, mail being withheld, food quality, lack of access to prescribed medication, and phone call withdrawals by correctional staff.
- **Individuals did not have trust in the grievance process** due to lack of information, withholding of materials, and frequent dismissals of their concerns.
 - "[W]hen asked for a form[,] they required explanation before they'd CONSIDER giving us one."
 - "I didn't know how to and I was afraid of retaliation and further prosecution."
 - "There isn't any kind of tracking system nor were they obligated to respond."

Preliminary recommendations for regulation revisions related to grievances:

- Access to an orientation program may be by video or written form. Additional measures ~~may~~ be necessary to ensure the orientation material is understood by all, such as translation for non-English speakers, must be taken by the facility administrator. (§ 1069. Inmate Orientation.)
- We recommend the ESC reject the workgroup recommendation to replace "appeal and have resolved" with "file" in § 1073. Inmate Grievance Procedure.
- We recommend the ESC define "reasonable" regarding "provision for response within a reasonable time limit" in § 1073. Inmate Grievance Procedure.
- The grievance process must include a mechanism that allows incarcerated individuals to remain anonymous while raising concerns.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

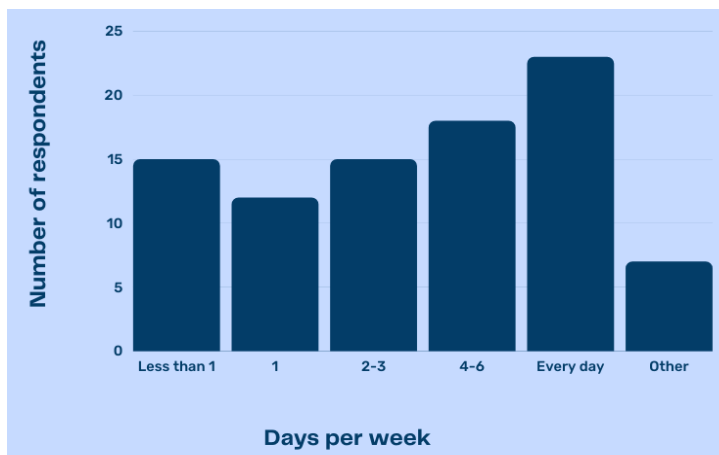
Did the facility allow their family and friends to visit them in-person?

- Yes - 59% (52)
- No - 41% (38)

Key Takeaways:

- **Most responses noted that visits were usually behind a window/glass.**
 - “[I]t was behind a glass and using a wall-phone. Then he was deported and it was awful not being able to touch my loved one before he was taken.”
- **Sometimes video calls were used instead of in-person visits.**
 - “I got moved to a newer facility where there was only video calls which was extremely difficult.”
- **Individuals reported being denied visits or phone calls for arbitrary reasons.**
 - “they took my visiting away for using the bathroom, or not go[ing] in on time.”
 - “Me as his mother I showed up eight minutes after 3 o’clock for a 330 appointment and was denied access or help.”
 - “I wasn’t allowed to contact my family for over 2.5 weeks.”
- **Many barriers were imposed on people visiting jails.**
 - “Visits were allowed, but it was a very hard process for the family to go through.”
 - “I was able to visit, but there were difficulties to this. Parking was paid, and there was no free parking available within walking distance.”

How often were they given the opportunity to communicate with their friends and family by phone or mail?



- Less than once a week - 16.7% (15)
- 1 day per week - 13.3% (12)
- 2-3 days per week - 16.7% (15)
- 4-6 days per week - 20% (18)
- Every day - 25.5% (23)
- Other/Self-description - 7.8% (7)

Note: Several respondents reported that phone call frequency varied depending on programming or if they were punished.

If they were a parent while locked up: Were they able to see their children during in-person visits regularly?

- Yes - 18% (10)
- No - 82% (46)

Key Takeaways:

- **Barriers to family engagement included long distances and high financial costs.**
 - “I was moved to a county 5 hours away from my home.”
 - “The phone system is so expensive, we couldn't afford calls daily.”
- **“Conditions of visiting were not adequate for children”**
 - “I wouldn't want my children to see me in there regardless but I was pregnant while incarcerated.”

Preliminary recommendations for regulation revisions related to family engagement:

- Protect against arbitrary cancellation of visits and phone calls (§ 1062. Visiting + § 1067. Access to Telephone.)
- Enforce rights to phone calls (§ 1067. Access to Telephone.)
- Make phone calls less expensive (§ 1067. Access to Telephone.)
- Help families travel to jail or subsidize costs (§ 1062. Visiting.)

STAFF USE OF FORCE AND SAFETY

Did staff use restraints on them or other people around them that felt excessive or unwarranted? (e.g., handcuffs, leg shackles, belly chains, etc.)

- Yes - 77.91% (67)
- No - 22.09% (19)

Have they or anyone they know been sexually abused by correctional staff?

- Yes - 21.95% (18)
- No - 78.05% (64)

Do they feel that disciplinary measures in the county jail were fair?

- Yes - 8.43% (7)
- No - 91.57% (76)

Were basic resources ever withheld as a form of discipline? For example: food, personal hygiene items, showers, out of cell time, visits or calls with loved ones.

- Yes - 83.72% (72)
- No - 16.28% (14)

How often did guards conduct safety checks on a usual day? Note: A safety check is conducted when a staff member does “rounds” and has direct visual observation of them.

- Every 15 minutes - 3.53% (3)
- Every 30 minutes - 7.06% (6)
- Every 45 minutes - 4.71% (4)
- Every 60 minutes - 23.53% (20)
- Less frequently than every hour - 41.18% (35)

- Other/Self-description - 20% (17)

Did this frequency of safety checks feel sufficient?

- Yes - 43.96% (40)
- No - 56.04% (51)

Key Takeaways:

- **Respondents overwhelmingly mentioned staff's overreliance on use of restraints that felt excessive or unwarranted. For example, during transportation to court or medical emergencies.**
 - "Guards handcuffed people during medical emergencies before rendering aid, seizures and heart attack."
 - "The handcuffs were so tight I lost feeling in my hands for months after and still do not have full functionality. They refused to loosen them. I was also hog-tied at one point. I did see another older man in an immobilization chair for hours. He seemed very calm and he asked to be removed from the chair but they refused."
- **Some individuals noted incidents or rumors of sexual harassment, assault, or other abusive behavior by jail staff.**
 - "Yes someone I know was sexually abuse while in custody at the jail by a correctional officer on duty, he has been charged with sexual assault."
 - "There's always rumors of staff who get too touchy."
 - "Numerous rapes and beatings by staff on inmates. No one cared."
 - "I was raped by an officer in there."
- **The vast majority of respondents believed that disciplinary measures in the county jail were unfair, extreme, and collective punishments.**
 - "I've seen many female inmates be assaulted, one for simply getting up and going to the window because she thought they had called her name. It was terrible."
 - "Way out of proportion mostly. In prison there is a clear set of consequences, that escalate for repeated offenses. Not so in jail. Jail punishments are commonly extreme for small infractions."
 - "[I]f one gets in trouble we all get in trouble and punished."
 - "They would tell us to face the wall then shoot pepper spray into our cells because they thought it was funny."
 - "Our entire module was put on lockdown 23 hours in a cell, 1 hour out, because the facility had to get new security cameras, we were on lockdown for over a month and did nothing wrong to be put there."
- **Respondents overwhelmingly documented how county jails withheld basic resources as a form of discipline.** Staff withheld individuals' canteen, family visits, mail correspondence, access to showers, rec time, clothing, cleaning supplies, and hot water.
 - "We were often locked in our cells as punishment which prevented ipus [sic] from showering, using phones, rec time."

- "Sometimes as punishment they would purposely give you old or inedible food or take away food you bought with your money. Often with [*sic*] holding proper hygiene to people as a form of punishment for acting out."
- "If staff felt that the module was not acting accordingly, they would threaten to withhold our future programming or would cut the time in half."
- "I was denied a shower for asking a simple question. I never got offered showers again after. One night the group I was shackled [*sic*] to was told to stand facing a wall for a really long time, like more than 1 hour. When we got back to the cells they told us that we missed dinner because we were late, like it was our fault."
- **The majority of respondents did not feel the frequency of safety checks were sufficient to protect individuals from abuse and violence.**
 - "A lot of things can happen in an hour."
 - "There were a few women who were a [*sic*] physically assaulted by other inmates in my cell block that the COs never even learned about."
 - "We could pretty much do anything we wanted as long as the noise level was kept to a minimum. There were a lot of very quiet fights that occurred."
 - "They sat in the cop shop and ate and talked with each other. They were non responsive to violent situations."
- **Many expressed concerns that these safety checks were perfunctory and ignored violent incidents.**
 - "They didn't actually do anything or check anything, just walked past the doors and acted like they were looking in. There were plenty of times when people weren't even in their cells and the guards didn't notice or didn't care."
 - "I felt raped by every check."
 - "They never did proper checks - just walked around and scanned their checkpoints so it looked like they did their job."
 - "The guards were so hostile that had they come around the cells more often, I would have been even more anxious."
 - "What good was them doing rounds if they simply ignored you."

Recommendations for regulation revisions related to staff use of force & safety:

- Increase frequency of safety checks. (§ 1027.5 Safety Checks.)
- Conduct safety checks in an appropriate manner that protects peoples' physical and mental health.

REENTRY

Did anyone at the jail help them to prepare for reentry before they left the county facility?

For example: job placement, school, vocational programs, housing, health insurance enrollment, driver's license, CalFresh, and other services.

- Yes - 15% (14)
- No - 85% (78)

Key Takeaways:

- **Many individuals shared emphatically that no reentry programs were offered.**
 - “I was released with nothing except a pair of very tight pants. No socks, shoes, or shirt. My personal belongings had somehow been lost.”
 - Someone who answered yes said that it was “Another person incarcerated” who helped them, not anyone working at the jail.
 - Someone who answered yes said that “there was never any follow up or check in. They were never certain about the resources or needs.”
 - “The first time I was made homeless because of jail and no services were offered.”
- **Individuals shared concerns about being released late at night without support.**
 - “He has always been spit out very late in the day or in the middle of the night without warning or assistance with services.”
 - “I was held for 7 days after my release date... the sheriff... finally issued my release on a Saturday without allowing me to contact anyone or notifying anyone.”
 - “I was released at night in a paper jumpsuit without underwear, bra or money - or notice to my attorney. I hadn't showered in nearly a week. They [*sic*] guards suddenly walked me through this door and showed me where to exit the building. I tried to stay inside to find a phone and a female guard put her hand on her gun. It was night, freezing cold, 20 miles from my house. There were no pay phones around. Thank god I got lucky and someone on the street helped me because even the release was cruel and unsafe.”
- **Some individuals cited specific service providers and programs as helpful, including the “Merit program”, “The Choices program”, and “pastors in religion classes”.**
 - “All of the deputies were nice enough to explain when to have clothing released for a transfer, file immigration paperwork and were extremely helpful.”

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

General Conditions and Recommendations

What else would they want people to know about their experience in county jail?

- “If I had a mentor by my side I would have never gone back in as many times as I did.”
- “Restorative practice would be to promote maturity while in custody as opposed to turning the same person with the same limited skills back onto the community to repeat the same behaviors.”
- “The county jail needs to restructure its purpose and objectives to ensure those who step foot in their facilities are afforded the proper tools necessary to succeed upon reentry.”
- “The officers mistreated, disrespected inmates, verbally abused inmates, threatened physical abuse by officers. They caused a sense of “hopelessness” in inmates.”
- “Guards need to be screened for associations with White terrorist groups.”

- “Male deputies should not be able to do rounds on the female side due to some of the things I have witnessed. Also a few deputies seem to have some personal/ mental issues that may be associated with performing his/her duties.”
- “The expensive price for county jail calls caused [a] strained relationship with my family. After a year of being in county jail I lost almost every source of support from the outside because my loved ones couldn’t maintain the high costs associated with me calling them.”
- “Every woman I met was going to lose their car, their job, their kids or their house (tent, apartment, etc) because of jail.”
- “It’s horrible especially for mental illness. Our mental illness shouldn’t be criminalized especially if we didn’t harm anyone or commit a crime ... A hospital with doctor support would have helped me better.”
- “The county jail is designed to persuade individuals to take a plea deal. They stress you out, over charge you for cheap food and mentally destabilize you... When people go in to court to discuss their case, it is impossible that they have a clear mind.”
- “It was a very traumatizing experience. Something that is hard to forget. It has been over 25 years since I was locked up, and I still dream about it all the time. County Jail is a horrible place with no type of rehabilitation offered. It was easy for me to learn how to be a better criminal and expand my network of people to help me in any illegal activity I wanted to get into.”
- “They did not care for our well being. They were there for a paycheck and that’s it. Felt like they degraded us.”
- “male officers making inappropriate advances and comments to myself and other women during my time there.”
- “So while there may be one or two officers that treat one with respect, the overwhelming culture is to see us as expendable, as worthy of inhumane treatment. One cannot protest against such treatment for [fear] of retaliation. If one protests, expect to be vilified, removed from general population, and subject to harsh treatments!”
- “My husband experienced a hunger strike and saw numerous assaults. He also watched someone die but they said it happened at another jail.”

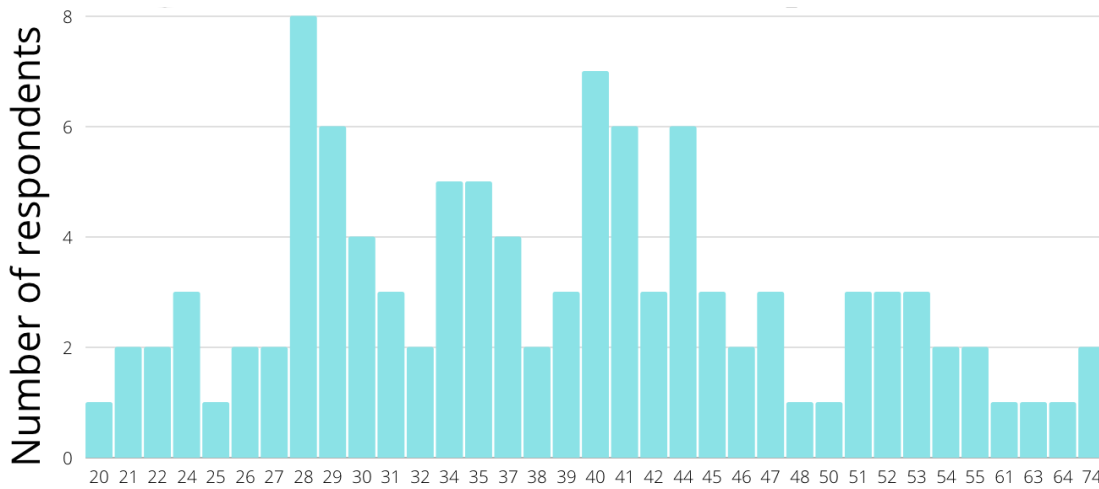
Is there anything else they would change about conditions in county jail?

- “Residents should be housed with similar commitments and receive accommodating services at intake- Self harm is problematic at this stage of confinement.”
- “Hygiene, how facility is kept clean, more in person visitations, new, clean mattresses should be provided for inmates.”
- “Resources for folks re-entering society. better nutritional food that fills you up, better hygiene items for people with no money.”
- “The cost of commissary, fees/cost of phone calls (and difficulty to make calls), removing the parking fee for visitors. I probably spent a hundred dollars on my friend during her one month stay, and I know family members were spending as well - and we’re talking about basic items like a 10 minute phone call a couple times a week, money for her to get a packet of hot chocolate, or parking for me to visit. It would be unmanageable for a low income family.”
- “Have feminine hygiene in the restrooms, let you see a doctor sooner than 3 days.”

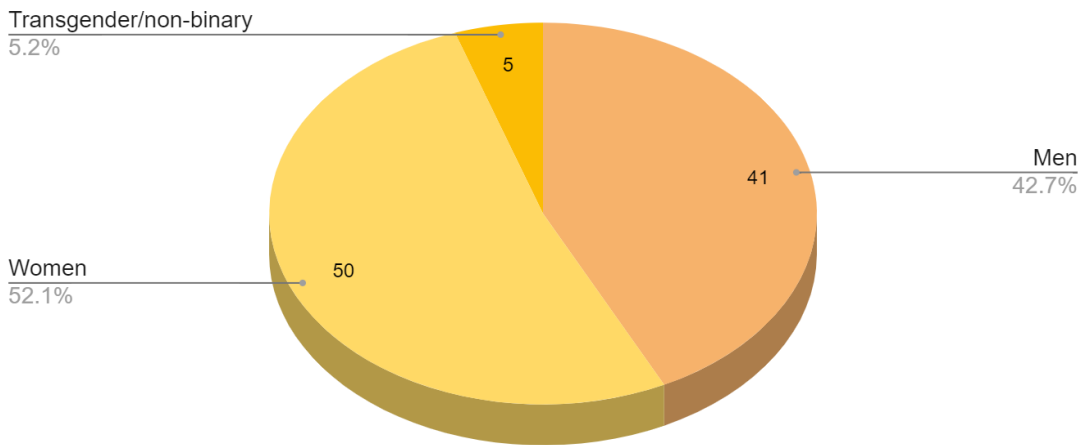
- “Staff and guards need training in dealing with incarcerated people and their mental health needs. They also need bias training because they were racist towards inmates.”
- “Opportunities for physical activity and getting sun.”
- “More pre-release programs and more outdoor recreation.”
- “Have folks who are leaders in the community to support with to reimagine what justice looks like for Black and brown people and for those who have mental health. Jail is not the answer. Community is, Healing is important.”
- “I would create an avenue for individuals to learn conducive skills that will lead to a prosperous future. Thorough background checks on the guards. Allow for community oversight. Implement restorative justice. Provide decent food and facilities.”

ADDITIONAL RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Age: How old were respondents?



Gender: How did respondents identify?



Note on sexual identity: 15 respondents identified as LGBTQIA+. This survey is limited in its makeup of LGBTQIA+ individuals and coverage of their unique experiences in the jail settings. This population should be a priority for future outreach.