



## What Is Coronavirus?

### And how will it affect people living in correctional facilities?

### You may have heard about “the new coronavirus”?

- There are many types of viruses out there. Most coronaviruses cause a mild cold.
- The “new coronavirus” causes a disease called “COVID-19”. Some infections are mild. Some people get a cough, fever and shortness of breath. A few need to be hospitalized.
- Death occurs more often among older adults.
- It started in China.
- As of March 2020, it has spread to every continent.

### Spread

- This virus spreads from person-to-person
  - When people are in close contact about 6 feet of each other or closer,
  - The longer you are close together the higher the likelihood of spread.
- When you cough or sneeze, droplets with virus particles spread in the air. Droplets can land in mouths or noses of people nearby. Droplets can be inhaled into the lungs.
- The new virus can spread by touching with bare hands a surface or object that has the virus particles on it, such as a used tissue. This is not the main way the virus spreads!
- The novel coronavirus can spread at different stages of sickness.

- People are thought to be most contagious when they are sickest,
- People might be contagious before they even show symptoms.
- Sometimes a jail or prison will want to separate sick people and people who don't have the infection.
- With an outbreak, visitation may be stopped.
- Persons entering jails or prisons can bring it in with them.
- If it's in a community, it's likely to show up in the local jail or prison.

### Prevention—Avoid Exposure!

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue. Throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. As long as singing Happy Birthday song!

### Symptoms

- Many infected people have reported mild symptoms or no symptoms at all.
- Symptoms can appear soon or long after contact with an infected person.
- Symptoms include COUGH, FEVER and SHORTNESS OF BREATH.
- CDC has just added these symptoms to the list:
  - Chills
  - Repeated shaking with chills
  - Muscle pain
  - Headache
  - Sore throat
  - A new loss of taste or smell.
- This could be 2 days, 2 weeks, or sometime in between!
- Serious disease & death are most

common in

- Older persons,
- Those with underlying medical conditions: heart disease, diabetes, lung disease, HIV based on age & other medical conditions.
- Do not confuse seasonal allergy symptoms (coughing, sneezing, runny nose) for a viral infection.

### Treatment

What is recommended to treat those already sick?

- Rest
- Drink fluids
- Take medicine to reduce fever (for example, acetaminophen).
- Antibiotics do not help viral infections but may help secondary infections.
- Research is ongoing to use already-developed medications to better treatment.
- Is there a shot to prevent Coronavirus?
  - No vaccine yet.
  - Research is ongoing to develop a vaccine to prevent infection.

### Incarceration

Prisons and jails are enclosed environments. Incarcerated persons sleep in close quarters, eat together, recreate in small spaces, and may be at increased risk for airborne infections due to close contact.

If someone:

- Develops symptoms of COVID-19,
- Has been in close contact with someone with COVID-19, or
- Has recently been transported from/through an area with widespread cases, **let medical services know!**

**And remember that during the pandemic, all health service fees for medical have been waived. ■**



## TIFA Contact

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### Find us!

**Note:** We read all mail but cannot answer every letter.

Our mission is strengthening families through support, education and advocacy.



## Remembering.....

**O**ur sincere condolences to all the families of officers and inmates who have lost their life to COVID-19. Our hearts go out to their families.

Timothy Bazrowx was one of the inmates from the Wynne Unit who died from COVID-19. Before his death Timothy had written TIFA a few letters. He heard Jennifer Erschabek on The Prison Show on January 31st when she had made a donation during their Pledge Drive. He told Jennifer he appreciated that.

Timothy worked in the Mattress Factory for most of his time inside. He was always finding ways to get the word out to the free world about the issues going on inside. His vow was to remain an advocate inside and vowed if ever released to advocate with TIFA on the outside.

At the time of his death the Thurgood School of Law Innocence Project was actively working on his case.

Timothy first wrote TIFA because he couldn't get denture adhesive. After some much needed help his last letter dated March 23rd said he had finally seen the dentist but still could not convince them they could give him denture adhesive.

A retired Veteran and quite the story teller, Timothy loved to write short stories and was actively looking for ways to get them published. He had received a small inheritance and was going to use that money to compile his stories into a book.

In 2019, the Marshall Project published his story *Fields of Blood: My Life As a Prison Laborer*. "The days would run together. The heat, the drudgery, the daily unpaid toiling in dirt and fields under the hot Texas sun."

Timothy, we will miss you. ■



The following information was taken from the website WebMD

## Coronavirus Recovery

**A**bout 8 in 10 people who get COVID-19, the disease caused by a coronavirus, will have only mild illness. But what exactly does that mean?

Mild COVID-19 cases still can make you feel lousy. But you should be able to rest at home and recover fully without a trip to the hospital. Here's what to expect and how to take care of yourself.

## Coronavirus Recovery Rates

Scientists and researchers are constantly tracking infections and recoveries. But they have data only on confirmed cases, so they can't count people who don't get COVID-19 tests. Experts also don't have information about the outcome of every infection. However, early estimates predict that the overall COVID-19 recovery rate is between 97% and 99.75%.

## How You Might Feel While Recovering

Not everyone who catches COVID-19 will notice symptoms. If you do get them, they may show up 2 to 14 days after your infection. And those symptoms can vary from one person to the next.

The most common sign is a fever, which for most adults is 100.4 F or higher. Nearly 9 in 10 people who test positive for the disease have a high temperature. It's a sign that your body is trying to fight off an invader.

About 70% of people who become ill have a dry cough. That's the kind that doesn't bring up any mucus or phlegm. But about a third have a cough with mucus.

You also might feel very tired. Less commonly, your throat may be sore and your head might ache. Your muscles and joints could hurt, and you might get chills, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

Some people who had COVID-19 said they had trouble taking deep breaths and felt like they had a tight band wrapped around their chest. Others have likened the illness to a bad cold. Still others said it was the sickest they've ever felt.

Loss of smell and taste have been reported in some cases. But researchers aren't yet sure about the link to COVID-19.

You might feel short of breath, as if you'd just run to grab a ringing phone. If so, call your doctor to ask about what you should do.

## What's the Recovery Time for Coronavirus?

It may take 2 weeks for your body to get over the illness. That's the average recovery time for mild cases, according to the World Health Organization. For those with severe or critical cases, recovery can take up to 6 weeks.

CDC guidelines say that if you've been sick, you should isolate yourself at home until all of these things are true:

- You haven't had a fever for 72 hours (3 days) without using a fever-reducing medicine
- Your symptoms are better, though they might not be totally gone
- It's been at least 7 days since your symptoms started OR you've had two negative COVID-19 tests 24 hours apart

## Recovery After Severe Illness With COVID-19

About 14% of people who have the new coronavirus need to stay in the hospital to get help breathing. This might last 2 weeks or more.

Some people who have severe COVID-19 get a complication called acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), which can damage your lungs and make it very hard to breathe.

If you're severely ill, you might need treatment in an intensive care unit (ICU). Many patients who spend time in the ICU lose weight and strength. You may also have memory problems afterward.

Symptoms	Coronavirus* (COVID-19) Symptoms range from mild to severe	Cold Gradual onset of symptoms	Flu Abrupt onset of symptoms	Seasonal Allergies Abrupt onset of symptoms
 Length of symptoms	7-25 days	Less than 14 days	7-14 days	Several weeks
 Cough	Common (usually dry)	Common (mild)	Common (usually dry)	Rare (usually dry unless it triggers asthma)
 Shortness of breath	Sometimes	No**	No**	No**
 Sneezing	No	Common	No	Common
 Runny or stuffy nose	Rare	Common	Sometimes	Common
 Sore throat	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes	Sometimes (usually mild)
 Fever	Common	Short fever period	Common	No
 Feeling tired	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes
 Headaches	Sometimes	Rare	Common	Sometimes (related to sinus pain)
 Body aches and pains	Sometimes	Common	Common	No
 Diarrhea	Rare	No	Sometimes for children	No

\*Information is still evolving. \*\*Allergies, colds and flus can all trigger asthma, which can lead to shortness of breath. COVID-19 is the only one associated with shortness of breath on its own. Sources: Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Your medical team will work with you to treat or manage these symptoms, including exercises to boost your strength.

## Recovery Outlook

Scientists are still looking at how a person's immune system responds to COVID-19 and whether you can catch the virus again after you recover. One early study on monkeys found that they didn't get infected a second time. But you might have the virus in your body for weeks, so it's a good idea to keep following official advice on washing your hands, keeping surfaces clean, and staying home when possible.

## How to Feel Better

There's no treatment for COVID-19. Some of the things you can do to speed your healing are similar to how you might take care of the flu or a bad cold.

**Eat healthy foods.** If you feel like eating, fuel your body with the vitamins and nutrients it needs to get better. Limit sugary or highly processed foods like cookies and sodas. If you don't have an appetite, you don't need to try to force food down.

**Drinks lots of fluids.** Do this even if you don't feel like eating. Water is always a good pick.

**Lower your fever.** Take acetaminophen or ibuprofen if you have a temperature or body aches. Be careful not to take more than a total of 3,000 milligrams every 24 hours. That includes acetaminophen alone as well as in medications like cold and flu pills and syrups.

**Rest.** Know that you'll probably feel better eventually. If your symptoms do get worse, call your doctor. ■

# Healthy Resolve

By Terri LeClercq

As this newsletter goes to press, we are all worried about the Coronavirus and its impact on the TDC prison system.

**First**, as those of you in the Prison Show Book Club already know, I hope all jail and prison inmates have someone to lean on, someone who will stand by them throughout their incarceration. I understand that many people no longer have family support. If possible, reach out to old friends, former churches or synagogues.

**Second**, turn to yourself: what can you do to strengthen your resolve to be the best and healthiest you can be? If something or some one in TDC is simply wrong, you might reconsider putting off writing that I-60 and then Step 1 and 2 grievances. Every single correspondent tells me that these procedures are merely face dressing and that nothing changes except perhaps illegal retaliation. But that's what we have to work with, so let's!

Now that we are so concerned about medical—everyone's medical—let's review the TDC and federal requirements for a medical grievance.

√ Did you properly fill out the I-60 sick call request and describe the medical problem carefully?

√ Did you write down the date and name of the person who "treated" you or discussed your medical problem?

√ Did you afterwards complain to the person who treated you? What was his/her response?

√ Did you write down the date and time for the person who did not help you?

If you answered "no" to any of the above questions, then reflect, think, organize until you have done as much as you now can. Otherwise, you will have a weak grievance. Try to get your information before you file. Request your medical records.

Outside people may be able to help get this information if you have given

them written permission. You must sign a HIPAA release form before TDC can provide any outside person (even your mom!) with your personal medical information. That's just the law, and you might as well get to work on getting your paperwork correct. You'll have to re-file and update these forms every six months, too.

If the Health Administrator turned down your properly written request, then you may decide to move forward with a Step 1 grievance.

√ Do you have the documents to prove whom you first complained to, when, and the answer?

√ Do you have the returned request with its reasons checked in the response?

√ Did you explain what happened to you because the medical help was delayed or denied?

If you answered "no" to any of these 3 questions, you will have a weak Step 1 and they will undoubtedly deny it.

Here are some general tips about these grievances: There has to be something the reader of the grievance can DO about your problem now. If you still have the medical problem, ask to see the doctor, or a different doctor, or to have a procedure/doctor that your first provider said you needed. Be specific—explain what each provider did/did not do. Write carefully so the reader has a clue what you are writing about. Keep your original I-60. Each of your problems requires a separate Step 1—don't mix provider's responses with your next problems. Use plain language and leave the medical or legal jargon to the professionals.

**Third** I'll share some of the contact information I have collected.

TDCJ Health Services: 2 Financial Plaza, Suite 625, Huntsville 77340. (936) 437-3589

Grievance and Patient Liaison Program, 2 Financial Plaza, Suite 625, Huntsville 77340 (913) 437-3003

Safe Prisons Program Manager: PO Box 99, Huntsville, 77342. (936) 437-8918

TCOOMMI (medical outside) 4616 W. Howard Lane, #200, Austin 78728. (512) 671-2134. tcoomi@tdcj.texas.gov

All of us in TIFA care about you and think about you. Be safe. Take special care. Keep in contact with your loved ones so they can worry a little bit less. ■

*Terri LeClercq, Ph.D., is the author of Prison Grievances: when to write, how to write*



Sometimes in our lives we all have pain  
We all have sorrow  
But if we are wise  
We know that there's always tomorrow

Lean on me, when you're not strong  
And I'll be your friend  
I'll help you carry on  
For it won't be long  
'Til I'm gonna need  
Somebody to lean on

Please swallow your pride  
If I have things you need to borrow  
For no one can fill those of your needs  
That you won't let show

You just call on me brother, when you need a hand  
We all need somebody to lean on  
I just might have a problem that you'll understand  
We all need somebody to lean on

Lean on me, when you're not strong  
And I'll be your friend  
I'll help you carry on  
For it won't be long  
'Til I'm gonna need  
Somebody to lean on

You just call on me brother, when you need a hand  
We all need somebody to lean on  
I just might have a problem that you'll understand  
We all need somebody to lean on

If there is a load you have to bear  
That you can't carry  
I'm right up the road  
I'll share your load

If you just call me (call me)  
If you need a friend (call me) call me uh  
huh(call me) if you need a friend (call me)  
If you ever need a friend (call me)  
Call me (call me) call me (call me) call me  
(Call me) call me (call me) if you need a friend  
(Call me) call me (call me) call me (call me)  
call me (call me) call me (call me)

# Camp Good News -Registration-

Camp Good News is still accepting applications knowing there is a possibility that the camp could be canceled at a future date.

Camp Good News provides a free, inclusive camping experience in a supportive Christian environment for those children ages 10 – 15 who have a family member incarcerated in a county, state or federal prison. Caring counselors emulate godly behavior while fostering healthy relationships, helping equip children with the tools they need to explore the



blessings and wonders of self. Through special speakers, worship and other faith-based activities, children experience the unconditional love of God and learn to participate as a positive member of the community. The camp hosts 60 kids (30 boys/30 girls) and is located near Navasota, Texas.

**This year's camp will be August 9 – 13, 2020.**

To request an application for your child to attend have your child's guardian call or email Camp Good News at (936) 662-3842 or edsalpc@yahoo.com. If you are inside the walls, you can send TIFA a letter and we will send you an application. ■

## Covid-19 and the Restorative Justice Ministries Network and its Work

**By Dr. Ed Davis**

When the TDCJ shut its doors as a way to limit the exposure of staff and inmates to the virus, two of our three daily ministries ceased. Hence, we could not go into the Walls Unit the night before release and share information with our brothers-in-white about when and how their last day of incarceration would be structured and what services await them on the outside. The information we normally provide about the services available to them in the “free world,” including our own Help Line were interrupted. We also could no longer staff the “First Contact House” across the street

from the unit with our volunteers who so beautifully welcome loved ones who come to pick up their special person. These volunteers address common concerns that their waiting guests have on their minds, and share their joy about release as well as comfort those who are anxious. “God’s Holy Spirit,” said one of the volunteers “is there with us as we try to make their day a little brighter during their wait.”

Because we can no longer go into the Unit the night before release and inform those soon to be released of the services available to them from the state, non-profits, and faith groups in their communities, the number of Help Line calls has been cut in half. When the virus ends we will immediately resume our “Welcome Back” and “First Contact” ministries assistance; counseling and information seeking calls will greatly expand. We are deeply sorry that the releasees with questions and needs are not presently getting the information which would make their path smoother.

Like all non-profits, we are experiencing a decline in giving, but our focus is on being ready to serve as soon as science and TDCJ allow. The most common grief expressed by our volunteers is the agony of not being able to serve. They are committed to returning. We shall overcome and be reborn with greater vigor than before. May that also be your response to the virus! ■

### ***A Special Offer for those who are currently incarcerated in the TDCJ***

- I would like a \$10.00 (one year/4 issues) subscription to the TIFA Contact Newsletter
- I would like a \$20.00 (two year/8 issues) subscription to the TIFA Contact Newsletter

I understand that this is not a TIFA membership. My \$10 or \$20 includes four(4) or eight(8) issues of a 1 year/2 year subscription. TIFA is not responsible for any lost issues that are not provided because of a change in unit OR TDCJ's failure to deliver. The subscriber is responsible for notifying TIFA of ALL address changes at least 45 days prior to the next issue. Issues will be delivered in the middle of Feb, May, Aug, and Nov of each year. Please notify TIFA if your unit changes or you are released.

\$  Donations are always cheerfully accepted!

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Inmate Name (please print clearly) TDCJ Number / Unit

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Signature Date

**Please mail your TDCJ Trust Fund money order to:**  
TIFA PO Box 300220 Austin, TX 78703

## HEP C LAWSUIT - Update

The Edwards Law is a small civil rights law firm located in Austin, Tx. Over the past decade, we have litigated many civil rights cases against the TDCJ.

We are now working on a federal class action lawsuit, Roppolo et al. V Linthicum et al. (TXSD 2:19-CV-00262), which seeks justice for all inmates infected with the Hepatitis C virus (HCV) in the Texas Prison System. TDCJ rations Direct Acting Antiviral medications (DAAs) that cure patients suffering from HCV infections in more than 90% of cases. Although these drugs are the standard of care for treating any individual infected with HCV, TDCJ monitors inmates infected with the virus until they have sustained liver damage instead of immediately starting treatment. Even then, treatment with new medications is not guaranteed.

Edwards Law is currently suing to force TDCJ to treat ALL inmates infected with HCV with DDA medications. If your loved one is currently incarcerated in the Texas prison system and is infected with HCV, they may be able to assist the lawsuit by writing to our office.

If your loved one is interested in assisting the lawsuit, please have them write us at The Haehnel Building, 1101 East 11th Street, Austin, TX 78702, attention "Hep C Class Action." ■



## ? What's Happening With the Denture Program ?

UTMB and TDCJ established a pilot program at the Goree Unit where inmates can be assessed and given their 3D dentures.

In order to qualify, you must have been incarcerated for at least 12 months to be eligible. Diabetics are given priority and those with special needs are put in line by the date their I-60 was received. Those with no upper or lower teeth are considered special needs. If teeth need to be pulled for total removal you must

heal for 6 months before you can begin the denture process. You must submit an I-60 to dental to get on the list. Inmates will be housed at the Goree Unit while this process is completed.

TIFA is now working with Rep. Wu to help people with denture issues. If you need help with dentures or denture cream please write us at TIFA, PO Box 300220, Austin, Tx. 78703. We will forward your letter to Rep. Wu. ■

## TIFA Wants to Hear from Writers & Artists About COVID-19 in the Prison System

Are you an incarcerated writer or artist? TIFA is always looking for stories and examples to help with our criminal justice reform campaigns. And we are VERY interested in your personal experiences and thoughts about the Coronavirus pandemic in the prison system. These are our categories:

**1) JOURNALISM:** This category includes any articles that tell people about things that actually happened. A journalistic work requires you to gather information through reporting and research. Facts must be attributed and verifiable, and the story must be fairly presented. Here are a few examples:

- *Explanatory:* this could be an article about strategies for maintaining sanitary conditions in your cell or a how-to/tips piece for surviving isolation.

- *Q&A:* this could be a question and answer style interview story about how someone you know is dealing with the pandemic. You can provide a short introduction of the person you are interviewing and follow with a list of questions and condensed answers.

- *Essay:* this could be an article written in the first person about your personal experience with a focus on facts. How has your day-to-day life changed? How have prison rules changed? What other developments have impacted you and the people you know? We would also like to hear about access to medical care or about the future of educational, therapeutic, or religious programming.

Please note that any facts in your piece must be information you gathered firsthand, not information that you've

obtained second or thirdhand (that is, information that someone has passed onto you about someone else). We cannot accept stories about your individual cases, nor can we accept stories that are accusatory about a specific person or group because of our limitations in verifying the facts.

**2) MEMOIR:** This category includes stories about your personal experiences. Compared to the journalistic essay, a memoir gives you more creative freedom in how you express yourself and allows you to reminisce more deeply about your past, present and future. Here are a few sample prompts:

- How is this pandemic affecting your family or your relationship with your loved one?

- How has this pandemic changed the way you view your life? How has it changed the way you view other people in your life?

- As the pandemic changes how we connect to each other in the world, what can people learn from you about social isolation, solidarity, or scarcity?

**3) FICTION/POETRY:** We will accept short stories and poems that directly or indirectly relate to the coronavirus pandemic or themes and issues that have arisen around it.

**4) VISUAL STORIES:** This category can include:

- a comic or short graphic story: a fictional or non-fiction story that you are telling in comic strip format. No more than two pages.

- art: a sketch or drawing with a brief explanation of your intention behind it.

All written pieces should be less than 1,500 words and the theme should be COVID-19 related. You must indicate in which of the 4 the categories you are submitting a piece. You can submit multiple entries. Deadline is July 1, 2020. Three judges from around the state with literary experience will select the winners. TIFA will offer \$20 for first place and \$10 for second place in each of the four categories. We will not be able to return the submissions and we reserve the right to use the submissions in our criminal justice reform campaigns. ■

*TIFA Prison Writing Project  
PO Box 300220  
Austin, TX 78703*

# Mental Health Tips When Dealing With Stress

By Tiffany L. Quick

I would like to offer some ideas you may find helpful when dealing with stress, whether it is from having an incarcerated loved one or just life in general. The following is a condensed version from the TIFA Well-Being Series posted on Facebook Live on April 15, 2020.

**1. Take Time For Yourself-** This is often very difficult to do. And as you do, you may feel distracted by thinking about what you “should be doing.” But taking time, even a few minutes each day, is critical for your well-being, and you will be better for those you love. Think back to what you used to enjoy.

Maybe it was having lunch with a friend. Do it again. Schedule a standing lunch. It will become a routine, at which point it isn't another commitment to dread, but something to look forward to.

**2. Find The Positive-** Even if it was as simple as a sunny day! Maybe it only took you 20 minutes to get to work this morning instead of the usual 30 minutes.

**3. Take A Nap-** Perhaps you can only squeeze in 10-15 minutes. Go into a dark, quiet room, and close your eyes.

**4. Write-** Write about what is causing you stress. Write about your goals and your fears. What steps can you take to achieve your goals? And what can you do toward conquering your fears? Poetry, give it a try-you may find that you enjoy it. Write a letter to your grandparents or your grandchild. Start a blog. Write that book that you have always wanted to write.

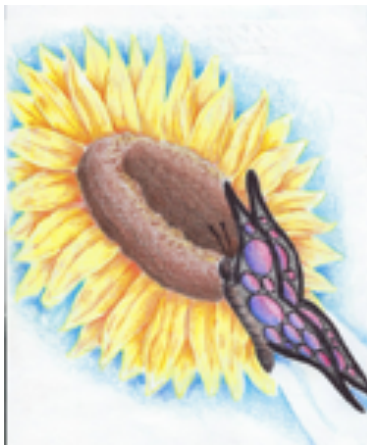
**5. Read-** You may not have 30 minutes to an hour, seven days a week to read, but maybe you can squeeze in 10 minutes or even just one page of reading before you go to bed.

**6. Art-** You can draw, you can paint or just color in a coloring book. Learn about different types of art, contemporary, abstract, etc. Go to a museum.

**7. Organize-** That messy closet. Your pantry, jewelry box, photos. The letters from your loved one. Create binders for each year and insert each letter into sheet protectors. Create a separate binder for your loved one's art, poetry, etc. Make a photo album of the TDCJ monthly photos taken during visitation, in the order of when they were taken.

**8. Prepare-** Make a menu for the week and then do food prep for the week. While this does take time, it makes life much easier throughout the week and helps you to stay focused on a healthier menu. Lay out your outfits for the week. This will save time in the morning. Do the same for your young child. If they are old enough, teach them to do so.

**9. Park-** Go by yourself-take a book, or take a sketchpad. Walk or jog around the park. Have a picnic, or play on the swings like used to when you were a child.



**10. Learn-** Try a new language. Learn how to sew. If you start now, maybe you can make your child's Halloween costume or your grandchild's Christmas stocking. Try a new recipe each week.

**11. Listen-** To a podcast. Listen to the Prison Show on 90.1 in Houston on Friday evenings at 9 PM. You can listen to or dance to your favorite music. Go to a concert. Check your area for free or lowcost concerts.

**12. Watch-** Binge-watch your favorite tv show. Go to a movie by yourself or with someone. Make this a regular commitment.

**13. Ritual-** Wake up earlier by 15 minutes and do a workout. Or fifteen minutes before going to bed, meditate. Or do both.

Something else you may try is watching the sunrise or the sunset. Take a bubble bath with music and a candle.

**14. Do For Others-** Check on a neighbor. Volunteer. Do something anonymously for someone else-An example could be to donate a TIFA membership for someone who can't afford one. You could make a family recipe book and give it to your siblings for Christmas. Or you could make a family photo album for each of your children or grandchildren.

**15. Monthly Dinner With Friends-** Make it a potluck so that the cost is shared.

**16. Stay Connected-Ask For Help-** Don't withdraw. Reach out and don't be afraid to ask for help. We all need help from time to time. Ask either a trusted person or reach out to a trained professional.

**17. Combine More Than One Suggestion-**Trouble sleeping: Set a regular bedtime, turn on some music, and light a candle while taking a bubble bath. Afterward, have a cup of camomile tea and read a book.

**18. Incarcerated Loved One-** Taking the previous suggestions a step further. Incorporate some of the above ideas with your incarcerated loved one. For example, purchase the same agreed-upon coloring book. The cost for two coloring books should be under ten dollars.You each color the same page and send it to one another. Due to the recent TDCJ mail changes, you may want to send a photo of yours. Place your loved one's coloring page in a frame and hang it up.

**19. Book Club-**First, determine how frequently you can realistically do this. Then choose a book. Each person will compile a list of thoughts and questions that will be submitted to all through letters for their responses, or you can discuss during visitation. This can also be very inexpensive. Many books can be read for free through different websites for you. Or you can both obtain a book through the library.

Find what works for you and your lifestyle. Remember, you must stay healthy both mentally and physically for your loved ones so that you can enjoy them and they can enjoy you. Be kind to yourself. You are important! ■

## SUPPORT TIFA WHEN SHOPPING!

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Another easy way to donate to TIFA is through Facebook. When your birthday is coming up, Facebook will invite you to create a fundraiser. You can select TIFA as your nominated charity. You then select how much you would like to raise and how long you would like your fundraiser to run. Facebook transfers all donations to the charities and does not charge a fee. Every donation, small or large makes a positive difference!

-- Thank you and Happy Birthday! --



Parole Approvals 2019-2020			
Month/Year	Cases Considered	Cases Approved	Percent
Apr-2019	7,068	2,453	35%
May-2019	6,772	2,459	36%
Jun-2019	6,642	2,491	38%
Jul-2019	6,194	2,482	40%
Aug-2019	6,702	2,668	40%
Sep-2019	6,378	2,660	42%
Oct-2019	6,554	2,540	39%
Nov-2019	6,491	2,610	40%
Dec-2019	5,193	1,957	38%
Jan -2020	6,604	2,535	38%
Feb-2020	6,231	2,454	39%
Mar-2020	7,139	2,820	40%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>77,967</b>	<b>30,129</b>	<b>39%</b>

These parole numbers include all cases reviewed including cases that have previously been denied a number of times. Source: LBB monthly report.

# Website Updates from the Board of Pardons and Paroles

Below is information that has been recently posted on the BPP website due to the COVID Disaster Declaration.

AUSTIN, TX (March 27, 2020) – There have been no changes to the manner in which the Board of Pardons and Paroles (Board) renders parole decisions. When rendering parole decisions the Board considers the totality of information available, including but not limited to: Current Offense(s), Criminal History, Age, Past Periods of Supervision, Drug/Alcohol Use/Abuse, Support Information, Victim Information, Institutional Adjustment and Program Participation.

Texas statute sets initial parole eligibility, not the Board. Additionally, if parole is denied the set-off before the next review is also in accordance with statute.

### Temporary Order – Signed on March 31st 2020

Governor Gregg Abbott issued a disaster declaration due to the coronavirus (COVID-19).

In response to the Governor's declaration, the Presiding Officer of the Board of Pardons and Paroles (Board) will implement the following temporary measures to reduce the non-essential in-person contact.

- 1. Telecommute/Telework** – the Board shall implement telecommute/telework for selected employees who are currently assigned to offices throughout the state.
- 2. Unit Interviews** – the Board shall temporarily suspend in-person interviews conducted by Board Members, Parole Commissioners and Institutional Parole Officers on the prison unit, except of capital cases. Video interviews will be conducted if capabilities are available.
- 3. Office Interviews** – the Board shall temporarily suspend in-person interviews conducted by a Board

Member or Parole Commissioner in the Board office for offender families and attorneys. Family and attorney interviews will be conducted by teleconference. Victims are encouraged to interview by teleconference.

- 4. Parole Panel Designations** – the Presiding Officer shall authorize any combination of a Board Member or Parole Commissioner to vote any offender's case as a parole panel regardless of the Board Office assignment, and regardless of where the offender is housed or being supervised, with the exception of the extraordinary vote cases which are required to be reviewed and considered for parole by the full Board.
- 5. Videoconferencing** – the Board shall authorize the utilization of videoconferencing for the Board's designees to conduct preliminary, revocation, premature release and sex offender condition hearings.

The above procedures temporarily supersede any existing rule, policy, directive or procedure until further notice, and supersedes any previous temporary order. ■

## TIFA Workshops

Due to the Stay at Home Order our New Braunfels and Houston Parole Packet Workshops have been postponed until our meeting locations open again.

The last two parole packet workshops scheduled for this year are:

Webinar via Zoom – June 30th  
Dallas/Plano – September 26th

You can register for these Workshops at <https://tifa.org/workshops-and-events/>



## Leadership & Advocacy Training

On May 12, 2020 TIFA will have a Leadership Training for our Chapter Chairs and members of our Advocacy Team.

DOUGLAS SMITH, M.S.S.W., Senior Policy Analyst with the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition will lead our training.

If you want to be a part of our Advocacy Team, please email me at sharon.mckinney@tifa.org. ■

## TIFA Weekly Chapter Meetings are Now VIA Zoom

We won't let the COVID-19 Stay at Home Order keep us from bringing you the support that you need from us.

Each week we are offering you a Chapter Meeting via Zoom. One of our Chapter Chairs will lead the weekly meeting.

Check your weekly Sunday update email for the day and time of the next weeks meetings. ■

## Who KNEW!!!! Coronavirus

By LaKeidru Blaylock & Maurie Spooner-Grant

This is the statement that has kept me in a state of amazement over the last 4 weeks. This time last year, I was thinking about making plans for my son's senior year, doing my dance, because it would be 1 down and 1 to go. Replaying, the song Lose Control by Missy Elliot in my head because it was going to be my 2020 anthem celebrating almost being an empty nester. Made all these plans, not knowing that we would be in the middle of a pandemic called COVID19, coining terms like social distancing and

getting suited just to go to the grocery store. Life as we knew would drastically change. Change as with anything can be difficult, but it is how we react to the change, how we navigate through it that determines the impact it has on our lives and our environment. There is hope and with intentional effort I have decided to put some techniques and processes in place that allow me to stay positive while at the same time have a positive impact on my life.

Focus on What I Can Control – By focusing on what I can control I am giving myself the permission to adjust in my life what was probably long overdue anyway. Changing what I eat, how I think, what I say, creating an environment that is conducive for my growth and evolution.

Creating Daily Affirmations – Writing affirmations is a way to speak life into myself, my situation and environment. I speak what I want to see and then I write it down and read it repeatedly. This allows me to see it, before I see it. This pandemic is affording me the opportunity to write and rewrite the vision I have for myself and my family, then create the plan for making it become a reality.

The Coronavirus although it is a time of uncertainty, it's what we make it and for me, I'm Ready To Reboot, Reset and Activate.

LaKeidru Blaylock  
Houston Chapter Chair

If your life is anything like mine, then you know all too well what juggling the day to day consists of during the era of COVID19. If you're a parent you're trying to manage meals, schoolwork and daily activities in an effort to maintain a sense of normalcy for your children. If you're an "essential employee" you're suiting up and heading to battle often times putting your safety at risk in an effort to serve your community. Then there is that overwhelming worry that sweeps over you when you think of your incarcerated loved one.

It is in these moments that we must make a conscious effort to manage stress and focus solely on what we can control. Stay prepared, relying on credible sources to obtain up to date information on the illness and how to prevent the spread. Maintaining a healthy balanced diet is vital

for building our immune system and if at all possible, incorporating physical activity.

However, the one that I hold dear to my heart is being KIND to myself in moments of anxiousness. It is okay to feel sad and overwhelmed but be patient with yourself and know that we are ALL adjusting to this new "normal".

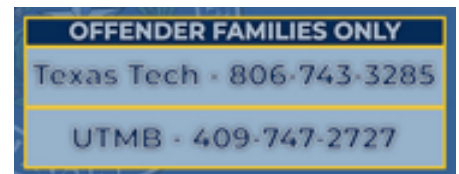
Be sure to tune into wellness Wednesdays for more tips on how to cope during COVID19.

Maurie Spooner-Grant  
Co-Chair Houston Chapter ♥

## COVID Medical Updates

TDCJ's Health Services Division's Patient Liaison Program and the Correctional Managed Healthcare partners at the UTMB and TTHSC will begin staffing 3 hotlines to address COVID-19 medical questions.

Two of these numbers are for inmate family members ONLY to get clinical updates of inmates under the universities care, and will operate from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. Unit nurses will be doing medical checks during the morning and then updating patient files so that the nurses manning the phones will have to most up-to-date information between 2:00 and 5:00. As inmates are placed in medical restriction OR medical isolation they will be asked to sign a medical release (HIPAA) form so the nurses can talk to family members. Families should designate one person per inmate to call for updates.



These phone numbers are ONLY for COVID medical updates. All other concerns need to be addressed to the Ombudsman office.

As of April 29 there were 381 TDCJ employees, staff or contractors who have tested positive for COVID-19 and 1050 offenders who have tested positive. Five employees and 12 offenders are believed to

have died as a result of COVID-19. There are now 46 employees and 156 offenders who have medically recovered.

The positive numbers below are the number of positives currently in TDCJ units as of April 29th and does not include those who have recovered, died or been released.

<b>POSITIVE TESTS</b>	<b>MEDICAL RESTRICTION</b>	<b>MEDICAL ISOLATION</b>
867	19,598	1067

**Medical Restriction:** Used to separate and restrict the movement of well persons who may have been exposed to a communicable disease to see if they become ill. These people may have been exposed to a disease and do not know it, or they may have the disease but do not show symptoms. Medical restriction can help limit the spread of disease.

**Medical Isolation:** For people who are sick and contagious. Isolation is used to separate ill persons who have a communicable disease from those who are healthy. Isolation restricts the movement of ill persons to help stop the spread of disease.

**Precautionary Lockdown-** As of April 8, 2020, any facility with a confirmed positive offender or employee COVID-19 test will be placed on a precautionary lockdown for at least 14 days from the date of the positive test. This additional proactive step is in addition to existing medical restriction and medical isolation measures already in place.

On April 29th, 41,301 inmates were on precautionary lockdown. ■

## Immigration & the Criminal Justice System Part 1

Jose Luis Martinez, a staff attorney for Immigration was a guest speaker at the Houston TIFA Chapter meeting in March. The following information is a general overview of his presentation.

Immigration laws are very complex and if you have issues or questions you should always consult with an experienced immigration attorney!

**Agencies You May Encounter-**  
• Immigration and Customs

**Enforcement (ICE)** - charged with enforcement of immigration laws in the interior of the United States

- **Customs and Border Patrol (CBP)** - charged with enforcement of immigration laws at the border and airports
- **Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR)** - the agency that oversees the immigration courts
- **Geo Group, Core Civic, MTC** - private companies contracted by the government that run facilities that house immigrant detainees

### From Criminal to Immigration Custody-

An individual can go from local or federal criminal custody to immigration custody a number of different ways. Detainers, that are requests to law enforcement agencies (LEAs), provide notice of an agency to assume custody of an individual arrested on criminal charges that ICE believes are deportable from the United States.

Some LEAs allow ICE to interview individuals in their custody. ICE will typically try to get information on entries, exits, status in the U.S., and criminal history.

Private individuals can also contact ICE if they suspect someone is in the country without permission

**Release from criminal custody-**With a release, criminal bonds only apply to criminal custody. A state or federal agency can hold a non-citizen for ICE to take custody for about 48 hours. A lot of Texas counties will honor immigration detainers and hold an individual for ICE to pick-up. Often the individual will not be released; instead, they will be transferred into ICE custody. Keep in mind, ICE and the criminal courts are separate entities and have separate jurisdictions; often times the state courts will not know that the individual has been transferred into ICE custody. This can lead to bond being forfeited and bench warrants issued. It can be very difficult to coordinate with ICE to have individual transported to criminal hearings.

ICE will make a determination on whether or not the individual will be released from custody on bond, parole, or released on his/her own recognizance. Conditions of release may include a combination of any of the following: a GPS monitoring bracelet, home visits, check-ins at the

ICE Field Office, phone check-ins, or monetary bond.

**Requesting a Bond from the Immigration Court-**If ICE denies release, you can then ask an Immigration Judge for a bond. The minimum bond is \$1,500 and there is no maximum bond amount. Certain crimes will bar a non-citizen from asking for a bond. Examples of potential crimes precluding bond include:

- Most drug crimes (possession/sale)
- Firearms offenses
- Theft offenses
- Assault
- Fraud
- Human trafficking
- Money laundering

Most denials usually require a conviction, BUT immigration court can still consider arrest records and pending charges. In these situations you will need to consult with an attorney; the law in this area is complicated!

### What do I need to show to get a bond-

If you are trying to get a bond you need to show that you are not a danger to persons or property. Your criminal history, arrests, convictions, criminal conduct will be disclosed during testimony along with your criminal record (extensiveness, seriousness of the offenses, and how long ago crime committed) and any pending criminal charges. You will also have to demonstrate that you are not a flight risk. You can do this by providing:

- Proof that individual will show up to future hearings
- Fixed address in the U.S.;
- Length of residence in U.S.;
- Family ties (and relief based on family ties);
- Record of appearances in court;
- Employment history;
- Membership in community organization;
- Financial ability to post bond.

Your history of immigration violations, if any, will also be important. This would include attempts to flee prosecution and manner of entry.

**REFERRAL HOTLINE: 1-833-468-4664**  
**Jose Luis Martinez- jmartinez@stcl.edu**  
**713.646.2994**

Part 2 on **Immigration and the Criminal Justice System** will be in our July Newsletter. ■

## Do You Have Some Information?

Tifa is looking for information. Do you have first hand information about suicides or unnatural deaths? Please let us know and include the details of who, what, how, when and where. We are also working on the Johnny sack issues. If you are not receiving the proper amount of items in your sack meals, please keep a meal diary for one week of items in all meals and time served. This will help us identify what and where the problems are. Hopefully things are getting better. ■

## Ask The Attorney - Answers to Your Civil Law Questions



Attorney Robyn Harlin

Attorney Robyn Harlin has volunteered to continue answering some of our common law questions.

### 1. WHAT IS COMMON LAW MARRIAGE?

A common law (or informal) marriage is a legal marriage without a ceremony or other formalities. It is created only if certain specific legal requirements are met. Proving a common law marriage does NOT depend on how long you have been living together or whether you have children together. Once proven, a common law marriage has no "lesser status." It is as legally valid as a formal marriage.

If you want to prove a common law marriage, you have to show that all of the following have been met:

You must show that you and your partner:

- are not already married, informally or formally, to anyone else at the time the marriage was created, AND
- both you and your partner were at least 18 years of age when the marriage was created; AND
- you agreed to be married, AND
- afterward, lived in Texas as a married couple, AND
- represented to others that you are married ("holding out" to others).

### 2. WHEN IS IT IMPORTANT TO PROVE A COMMON LAW MARRIAGE?

Proving the existence of a common law marriage can be important when a relationship is ending (divorce) and in determining inheritance rights.

- **Divorce** – Under Texas law, all property acquired during a marriage (formal or common law) is community property. If a common law marriage is proved, community property is divided the same as if the parties were formally married. It doesn't matter which spouse made the purchase or whose name is on the title. Debts accumulated during a common law marriage are also divided between the spouses. If no common law marriage is proved, there is no marital property or debts to divide. As single people, the parties will keep their personal property and property titled to them, and will remain individually responsible for their debts. Proving a common law marriage can affect whether partners who end their relationship can split property and liabilities between them.

- **Inheritance** – If married formally or at common law, a spouse is entitled to inherit from the other spouse if the other spouse (decedent) died without a will (died intestate). If a person can prove that they were married to the decedent at common law, they might be able to claim a share of the decedent's estate.

### 3. HOW DO I PROVE THAT WE AGREED TO BE MARRIED AND REPRESENTED TO OTHERS THAT WE WERE MARRIED?

It does not depend on one particular fact. The court can infer an agreement to be married and holding out to others by proof that you lived together, told others that you were married, used your partner's last name, filed joint tax returns as spouses or as a married person filing singly, signed leases or other documents as spouses, made joint purchases, included your partner on your health insurance, made your partner the beneficiary of a life insurance policy, made joint loan applications or agreements, applied for public benefits and listed your partner as "spouse", and having children together. Introducing your partner as your spouse on a single occasion might not be enough by itself, but it may be if coupled with other evidence suggesting that you acted like a married couple and that others

thought you were married.

### 4. HOW LONG DO I HAVE TO PROVE WE WERE MARRIED AT COMMON LAW AFTER WE SEPARATE?

If you are separated for more than two years and have not taken any action to end the marriage (such as filing for divorce), the law presumes that you and your partner never intended to be married. It makes it harder for you to prove a common law marriage existed if you wait for more than two years after you separate before taking action.

### 5. WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR STIMULUS MONEY?

Bottom line – NO you cannot receive stimulus money if you are incarcerated. Although some inmates are receiving the \$1,200 it is fraud if you don't return it.

The IRS is relying on 2018 or 2019 tax returns, and does not know whether the taxpayer is deceased, incarcerated, or divorced, all of which, among other factors, would impact their eligibility to receive stimulus checks. So yes, the IRS may have sent it to you, your ex-wife etc. based on the tax returns because they would not have been aware if since that time you went to jail, died or were divorced.

If you received the stimulus money you can voluntarily return the money. For those who don't pay it back the IRS can attempt to recover the money.

### 6. IF I AM DUE INHERITANCE WHILE INCARCERATED WILL I RECEIVE IT?

Texas Probate law is extremely complicated. One size does not fit all. I want to briefly touch on inheritance while incarcerated and offer to do a full article for you in the next newsletter.

In short, under most circumstances if you are the beneficiary of a Will you can receive the assets. If you owe back child support, no matter how long you have owed it, it will be taken out of the Inheritance money first.

If you are beneficiary of a Will and will be incarcerated for any length of time, I suggest you have a Trust in place. I will discuss this in-depth in the next newsletter. ■



## WSD...not locked down by lockdowns

By Becky Haigler

During the Covid-19 crisis, TIFA has been encouraged to hear about the level of creativity and effort coming from the Windham School District to support our incarcerated loved ones. WSD has been able to keep instruction going for students, especially those working on programs needed to satisfy parole requirements.

Beginning March 20, 2020, all academic courses, cognitive programs, and career/technical education except for hands-on sections, are being provided to students as individualized packets produced by teachers working remotely. Teachers send lessons to unit principals, who print them out and arrange for distribution, and for the collection of lessons to be graded by teachers and returned with feedback to students. Principals have helped recruit peer tutors to help students with questions they may have while working through lessons on their own.

Understanding the importance of limiting idleness in the prison setting, Windham School District has worked to make library books available for all residents experiencing lockdown status and have provided materials related to individual health and wellness, including fitness activities to be performed in cells. Health and wellness was one of the weekly themes pursued by Windham during the virus crisis.

The district has not been content to get by with minimum effort during the Covid-19 crisis. Instead WSD has shown a high level of innovation and forward movement, including an increased level of technical application for employees, and a weekly focus on specific goals for the district. After initiating the distance learning

model, they encouraged new enrollments, as other residents saw Windham students working in their cells and wanted to take part. Seeing the success of the distance learning model, Windham began a trial of offering coursework to residents previously ineligible because of their housing status...G5s and AdSeg residents.

In late April, the district focused on career preparedness in some new ways. First, a career interest inventory was distributed. Based on the inventory results, WSD provided a list of possible careers to students, who were then able to choose up to three possibilities for further exploration and study. The results of this survey and student feedback will help Windham in planning future course offerings.

Thanks to Windham Schools Superintendent, Kristina Hartman, and her staff for their service to our loved ones. ■

## Second Chance Pell Experiment Expanding

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**April 24, 2020**

WASHINGTON – U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced that the U.S. Department of Education is inviting a new cohort of 67 schools to participate in its Second Chance Pell experiment, creating more education opportunities for incarcerated students.

“I’ve had the pleasure of visiting several Second Chance Pell institutions and have seen firsthand the transformative impact this experiment has on the lives of individuals who are incarcerated,” said Secretary DeVos. “By expanding this experiment, we are providing a meaningful

opportunity for more students to set themselves up for future success in the workforce. The stories I’ve heard from students and institutions engaged in the experiment are very encouraging, and we look forward to seeing how this expansion will help even more students achieve a better future.”

The two Texas schools that will be added to the original colleges in Texas already participating in the Pell grant program include Texarkana College and Trinity Valley Community College. ■

## Commissary News!!

Commissary Services will implement a modified commissary schedule and procedures for any units that are on the recent administratively imposed lockdowns, or that may subsequently be placed on lockdown. inmates will be allowed to purchase the following:

- Correspondence supplies up to \$10 (paper, pens, envelopes, etc.)  
Stamps - up to 30 stamps, but does not count as part of the \$10 limit above
- Hygiene items:
  - (1) Shampoo
  - (1) Toothbrush
  - (1) Toothpaste
  - (1) Deodorant
  - (1) Comb
  - (5) Soap
  - (2) Toilet Paper
  - (1) Box Tampons (female only)
- Electrolytes - individual serving drink mix (50)

Operationally, security staff will collect offender ID cards and order slips and bring to commissary. Commissary staff will fill orders, label the bags with offender’s name, number, and housing location, and return to security staff to deliver to the offenders.

This spend will be part of their regular two week spend. Stamps do not count against this limit. This spend will not be available on Ecomm.

\*\*The Commissary Department is now considering expanding the lockdown spend to include several food items. ■

# Lowering the Cost of JPay Stamps

By Jennifer Erschabek

With in-person visits now suspended in TDCJ families cannot see their loved ones and it is hard to stay in touch with incarcerated family members to determine if they are safe. If the prison is on medical lockdown or if their loved one is quarantined they are not even allowed phone calls. The only option this leaves is the use of the regular mail or the use of JPay services.

The use of JPay is beneficial to both families and TDCJ. JPay offers the speed and convenience for families using an email like service to stay in touch even though it is a one-way service. If tablets were available there would be two-way communication helping families to communicate in a more timely manner. Tablets would also offer TDCJ another financial and security incentive with the monitoring of out-going mail.

## JPay is beneficial to TDCJ because it:

- eliminates the inspection of incoming regular mail for contraband,
- protects mail handlers from unknown substances
- allows for the scanning of code words and illegal activity,
- provides TDCJ an electronic record of incoming emails, and reduces the amount of TDCJ man-power required to interact with incoming communications.

## Lowering the price of Jpay for family members, would:

- help lower an incarcerated individual's anxiety by providing more communication with their families in all situations including medical lockdowns and disasters and
- provide families a financial incentive to use JPay.

## The Current PHONE Revenue Collected by TDCJ: (Average for Dec 2019-Feb 2020)

Average no. of Completed Calls per month: 2,609,930  
 Average Total Minutes per month: 40,382,713  
 Phone Gross Revenue per month: \$2,422,963  
 Phone Commission: \$969,185  
 Annual FY19 Phone 40% Commission: \$10,304,082

## The Current ELECTRONIC MESSAGING Revenue Collected by TDCJ: (Average for Dec 2019-Feb 2020)

Average postage used per month: 428,926  
 Average eMessaging Gross Revenue per month: \$201,595  
 Average eMessaging Commission per month (at 40%): \$80,638  
 Annual FY19 eMessaging 40% Commission: \$1,015,915

## The Cost of JPay in Other State Prison Systems:

Until recently, families and advocates who used JPay were able to purchase JPay 'universal stamps' in any state at a lower rate and use them in Texas. Now you can only use stamps in the

state they are purchased in.

In the 20 states that use JPay Texas ranks 19th based on the price per JPay stamp. The lowest price that families can purchase stamps in Texas is a package of 50 stamps for \$21 (\$.42/stamp) and Washington is the cheapest at \$.17 per stamp. Below is the rank by package.

## Cost of Stamp Ranked by Lowest Package

State	Lowest Rate	Highest Rate	Ave Rate	Rank
Washington	0.17¢	0.33¢	0.24¢	1
Michigan	0.20¢	0.25¢	0.22¢	2
Ohio	0.20¢	0.30¢	0.25¢	3
Arizona	0.22¢	0.25¢	0.24¢	4
California	0.22¢	0.26¢	0.24¢	5
New York	0.23¢	0.30¢	0.27¢	6
Louisiana	0.25¢	0.30¢	0.28¢	7
Missouri	0.25¢	0.25¢	0.25¢	8
Nebraska	0.25¢	0.25¢	0.25¢	9
N. Dakota	0.25¢	0.35¢	0.30¢	10
Virginia	0.25¢	0.39¢	0.33¢	11
Florida	0.35¢	0.44¢	0.41¢	12
Georgia	0.35¢	0.35¢	0.35¢	13
Kansas	0.35¢	0.35¢	0.35¢	14
Idaho	0.40¢	0.47¢	0.44¢	15
Minnesota	0.40¢	0.40¢	0.40¢	16
New Jersey	0.40¢	0.40¢	0.40¢	17
Colorado	0.41¢	0.50¢	0.46¢	18
Texas	0.42¢	0.47¢	0.45¢	19
Kentucky	0.44¢	0.44¢	0.44¢	20

\*Thank you to Birdy Padron for collecting the data.

## Modification of CenturyLink Contract:

The CenturyLink Contract was re-negotiated in 2018. The Securus and JPay contracts are subcontracts of the CenturyLink Contract. The cost of phones was dramatically reduced because the initial cost of installing the phone infrastructure had been recovered. However, the cost of the JPay stamps was not considered for a price reduction. When tablets are available then the emails should be free. Just the cost savings in manpower and security would cover any costs.

## A Few Phone Notes:

The Offender Telephone System (OTS) is now operating 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Inmates are being escorted to phones when they are available even after traditional hours. Each inmate is receiving 2 free 15-minute calls a week which resets every Tuesday. Disciplinary restrictions have been suspended. Inmates who do not have access to the OTS are being escorted to hardline phones in the units to make calls. ■



## Texas Inmate Families Association

Strengthening families through support, education, and advocacy

TIFA  
P.O. Box 300220  
Austin, TX 78703-0004

**CONTACT**  
Vol.25 No. 2 Apr. 2020

## TIFA Chapters

<p><b>Amarillo</b> 3rd Friday, 6:30 pm Petro Truckstop Meeting Rm 8500 E I-40 Amarillo, TX 79118 (806) 420-1684</p>	<p><b>Corpus Christi</b> 2nd Tuesday, 7:00 pm New Life Behavior Ministries 3833 S. Staples, Suite S-103 Corpus Christi, TX 78411 (361) 960-6059</p>	<p><b>Karnes County</b> 2nd Thursday, 6:30 pm First Baptist Kenedy 209 E School Road Kenedy, TX 78119 (281) 964-9928</p>	<p><b>Pearland - South Houston</b> 3rd Tuesday, 6:30 pm (exc Nov &amp; Dec) Manvel Bible Chapel 4230 FM 1128 Pearland, TX 77584 (281) 300-7275</p>
<p><b>Arlington</b> 2nd Tuesday, 6:30 pm George W. Hawes Library 100 South Center St Arlington, TX 76010 (817) 721-1398</p>	<p><b>Dallas</b> 2nd Tuesday, 6:30 pm Prairie Creek Baptist Church 3201 W 15th Plano, TX 75075 (469) 826-7893</p>	<p><b>Lufkin/Nacogdoches</b> 2nd Tuesday, 6:30 pm First Baptist Church 411 North Street Nacogdoches, TX 75961 (936) 635-4010</p>	<p><b>San Angelo</b> 2nd Thursday, 6:00 pm Immanuel Baptist Church 90 E 14th St San Angelo, TX 76903 (512) 371-0900</p>
<p><b>Austin- Central</b> 2nd Monday, 7:00 pm AGE Center 3710 Cedar Street Austin, TX 78703 (512) 775-1797</p>	<p><b>Ft. Worth</b> 2nd Monday, 6:30 pm St. Christopher Episcopal Church 3550 S.W. Loop 820 Fort Worth, TX 76133 (817) 798-9010</p>	<p><b>McAllen</b> 3rd Tuesday, 7:00 pm McAllen Public Library 4001 N 23rd St Edinburg, TX 78504 (956) 570-2391</p>	<p><b>San Antonio</b> 2nd Wednesday, 7:00 pm TriPoint- A Center for Life 3233 North St Mary's Street San Antonio, TX 78232 (210) 872-5087</p>
<p><b>Beaumont</b> 1st Tuesday, 6:30 pm St. Jude Thaddeus Catholic Church Family Life Center 6825 Gladys Beaumont, TX 77726 (409) 617-8395</p>	<p><b>Houston</b> 2nd Tuesday, 7:00 pm United Way of Greater Houston 50 Waugh Drive Houston, TX 77007 (713) 261-0638</p>	<p><b>New Braunfels</b> 1st Thursday, 7:00 pm Peace Lutheran Church-Cafe 1147 South Walnut New Braunfels, TX 78132 (830) 237-2679</p>	<p><b>Tyler</b> 2nd Thursday, 6:30 pm Freedom Fellowship 2915 SSE Loop 323 Tyler, TX 75701 (903) 504-9771</p>
<p><b>Bryan/College Station</b> 1st Tuesday, 6:00 pm Friends Congregational Church 2200 Southwood Dr. Bryan, TX 77845 (832) 608-3371</p>	<p><b>Humble</b> 2nd Thursday, 6:30 pm Cathedral of Praise Assembly of God 11303 C.E. King Parkway Houston, TX 77044 (281) 224-2002</p>	<p><b>Paris</b> 3rd Tuesday 6:30 pm Paris City Square 2515 Bonham St Paris, TX 75460 (903) 407-0984</p>	<p><b>Virtual Chapter</b> (Zoom Meeting) 2nd Wednesday, 7:00 pm (409) 789-7376</p>
<p><b>Conroe</b> Last Monday, 7:00 pm Eagle's Nest Ministries 1450 Blake Road Conroe, TX 77304 (281) 435-9908</p>			<p><b>Waco</b> 3rd Thursday, 6:30 pm Waco Hispanic Chamber of Commerce 915 La Salle Ave Waco, TX 76706 (254) 290-9551</p>

**All meeting places are temporarily closed because of COVID-19 and our chapters are meeting via Zoom. Call a chapter near you for more information**

Check our website calendar at [www.tifa.org](http://www.tifa.org); times and locations are subject to change.

Also look for new TIFA Chapters starting near you.

If you are interested in starting a TIFA chapter in your area, please contact the TIFA office at (512) 371-0900 or send an email to [tifa@tifa.org](mailto:tifa@tifa.org)