

Incarcerated People – State and Local Facilities Recommendations

2020 California Citizens Redistricting Commission

Submitted July 7, 2021

RECOMMENDED ACTION

For the full Commission’s consideration, the Incarcerated Populations-State and Local Facilities subcommittee recommends multiple strategies in its effort to educate and activate incarcerated people housed in state and local facilities. These strategies will help ensure greater accessible, inclusive, and equitable participation in the redistricting process.

Presenters: Commissioners Fernandez and Sinay

Purpose: The Incarcerated Populations-State/Local Facilities subcommittee’s purpose is to recommend strategies to ensure that the redistricting process is accessible to people incarcerated in California’s state and local facilities.

Process: We invited advocates for incarcerated people and their families, one who was formerly incarcerated, and a representative from California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation who presented to the Commission on January 26, 2021. In addition, the subcommittee met with representatives from state and local incarcerated facilities, including youth detention centers. These conversations identified barriers and potential recommendations to make redistricting accessible to California’s incarcerated people.

Background:

Per Elections Code Section 21003(d), the Legislature requested the Citizens Redistricting Commission to: “Deem each incarcerated person as residing at that person’s last known place of residence, rather than at the institution of that person’s incarceration.” On January 12, 2021, the Commission unanimously adopted the Legislature’s request related to incarcerated people in the California state correctional facilities.

Recommendations to be Approved by the Commission:

1. Use a paper Community of Interest Tool with prepaid postage.

- Due to security concerns, incarcerated people do not have access to the internet and, thus, are unable to access the online Community of Interest tool or provide input at the Commission meetings.

2. Use Trusted Entities/Messengers

- Partnerships with trusted messengers matter.
 - Invest in community-based organizations (CBOs) who have deep roots, established trust, and in-depth understanding of the incarcerated population to assist with our outreach efforts. Representatives from the facilities meet with these community leaders and can facilitate conversations.

- Working with trusted messengers will help increase participation rates in incarceration facilities and with families of incarcerated people. They can refine the message in a way that connects with the community.

3. Utilize Media

- Engage and partner with in-prison media like *Initiate Justice* who presented to the Commission, and has a newsletter approved in incarcerated facilities.
- Engage and partner with media outside the facilities to connect with families.
- Identify social media groups for incarcerated people and post in those groups.

4. Public Meetings/Hearings

- None – cannot participate due to lack of internet and security concerns.

5. Translation/interpretation work

- The incarcerated population within the California's state and local facilities speak many different languages. Thus, we need to provide translated paper community of interest forms in the Commission approved languages.

6. Public Service Announcements

- Because we cannot conduct public education sessions in the facilities, the Commission should create short videos, specifically for incarcerated people that explain redistricting, that their input matters, and that they are being represented in their last home address before incarceration.
- Facilities will broadcast these announcements.

7. Important considerations

- Use easy to understand language.
- Use trusted messengers.
- Families and formerly incarcerated people will also be reached with these efforts.