

District of Columbia  
Corrections Information Council



# USP ATWATER

## Inspection Report



*USP Atwater*

*(photo by Federal Bureau of Prisons)*

February 19, 2019



## District of Columbia Corrections Information Council

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### *About the District of Columbia Corrections Information Council*

The District of Columbia Corrections Information Council (CIC) is an independent oversight body mandated by the United States Congress and the Council of the District of Columbia to inspect, monitor, and report on the conditions of confinement in correctional facilities where inmates from the District of Columbia are incarcerated. This includes facilities operated by the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), the District of Columbia Department of Corrections (DOC), and private contractors.

The CIC reports its observations and recommendations to the District of Columbia Representative in the United States Congress, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, the Council of the District of Columbia, the District of Columbia Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice, the Director of the BOP, the Director of the DOC, and the community.

Although the CIC does not handle individual complaints or provide legal representation or advice, individuals are still encouraged to contact the CIC. Reports, concerns, and general information from incarcerated DC residents and the public are very important to the CIC, and they greatly inform our inspection schedule, recommendations, and reports. However, unless expressly permitted by the individuals or required by law, names and identifying information of inmates, corrections staff not in leadership, and members of the general public will be kept anonymous and confidential.

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## Executive Summary

### USP Atwater Facility Profile

**Dates of Inspection:** April 11-12, 2018  
**Location:** Atwater, California  
**Distance from DC:** 2,828 miles  
**Year of Activation:** 2002

**Security Level:** High  
**Rated Capacity:** 1,008  
**Average Daily Population 2017:** 1,186  
**Inmate-to-Staff Ratio:** 3:1 (Custody Staff 5:1)

### Atwater Total Population – April 2018

**Population:** 1,280  
**Average Age:** 37.5  
**Average Sentence:** 184 months

### Atwater DC Population – April 2018

**Population:** 30 (2% of total population)  
**Average Age:** 38.5  
**Average Sentence:** 269 months  
**Cost of 15-minute call to DC:** \$3.15

### Facility Highlights

The CIC highlights the following programs and facility practices:

- In the year leading up to the CIC inspection, there were frequent facility lockdowns that adversely affected inmates' access to programming and communication.
- At Atwater, inmates who do not make payments required under the Inmate Financial Responsibility Program (FRP), have their inmate accounts frozen. Many DC inmates reported having FRP payments greater than the \$25 that is typically charged per payment in other BOP facilities.
- The CIC received numerous comments regarding the disciplinary process at Atwater, primarily in reference to the severity of sanctions that include monetary fines and account encumbrances.
- Numerous inmates reported having had the names and contact information of family and friends, deleted off of their phone and email lists, making it extremely difficult to stay in touch with their loved ones.
- Atwater implemented policies to restrict the sources from which reading material and mail enters the facility. More specifically, the policies designated that books had to be ordered through the prison, and that general mail from family could not be on colored paper, contain marker, crayon, stickers, lipstick, etc. Since the inspection, the BOP rescinded facility policies that added such restrictions to the purchase of reading material.
- Many DC inmates reported being transferred to USP Atwater as a disciplinary measure.
- The CIC received a number of concerns from Atwater inmates that their unit teams do not understand their DC sentences, and therefore do not provide adequate opportunities to participate in programs that would assist in their chances of being granted parole. Some inmates also reflected that they do not have adequate opportunities to meet with the parole board.
- Numerous inmates reported that they do not receive all of the hygiene products that they should, and this issue has only been exacerbated by the facility lockdowns.
- Positive highlights from the Special Housing Unit (SHU) included that Atwater provides SHU inmates with limited programming on one of the unit ranges.

- Of significant concern in the Special Housing Unit SHU, a number of inmates reported that an inmate died on the unit, after officers failed to respond to his requests for medical assistance in a timely manner.
- The Reintegration Housing Unit (RHU) is a specialized unit created as an alternative to traditional segregated housing, targeted to male inmates identified as verified or unverified protective custody cases. Atwater is one of three BOP facilities where the program is available. There were no DC inmates in the RHU program at the time of the inspection.
- The Challenge program is a BOP program designed to be a therapeutic community to address issues of substance abuse and mental illness. Atwater staff reported that while the capacity of the unit is 128, the capacity of the Challenge program itself is only 60.
- In reference to the Atwater Challenge program, DC inmates reflected that during facility lockdowns they are not able to participate in programming, and thus have been stuck in certain program levels because they cannot complete the level components.
- During the opening session executive staff explained that the warden implemented an incentive-based program model designed to “engage inmates to invest in themselves.” The program rewards inmates for completing education programs.
- Over the past year, there have been general reports that BOP residential reentry center/halfway house time has decreased, in terms of availability and amount of time spent, due to a reduction in the number of active facilities.
- Following an alleged incident of sexual misconduct, any evidence collection is completed at a clinic that is an hour drive from USP Atwater.

### **CIC Recommendations**

Based on the inspection of USP Atwater, the CIC makes the following recommendations:

- When lockdowns are necessary, Atwater should consider restricting lockdowns to the unit where a specific incident occurred. For example, if there is a fight or altercation between two people on one unit, the facility should only lockdown that unit or the individuals involved, for as short a time as possible.
- Atwater should consider other options for continuing programs, work, and recreation during lockdowns.
- At least four DC inmates commented that their J&Cs indicate that FRP payments are only to be made from institutional wages/prison job, rather than community funds (money that inmates’ families send to them). Based on these comments, the CIC recommends that DC and the BOP work together to ensure that the J&Cs of DC code offenders are followed, or at least, taken into consideration by BOP officials and staff.
- At other BOP facilities, FRP payments are generally kept around \$25 per payment. While Atwater is within the bounds of the BOP program statement by charging more than \$25 per payment, this does not align with the general practice of BOP facilities. The CIC recommends that the Atwater follows the practice of other BOP facilities in typically charging \$25 per payment. Additionally, the CIC recommends that the BOP review its FRP policy, in light of facilities’ common practices. Based on these practices, it may be appropriate to cap FRP payments at approximately \$25 per payment.
- USP Atwater should use sanctions that are proportionate to and targeted toward the type of disciplinary incident that an inmate was found guilty of. The disciplinary process loses legitimacy and effectiveness when all sanctions are levied in response to any level of disciplinary violation, or when sanctions are imposed without a finding of culpability.

- USP Atwater should not clear contact lists when inmates have a shared contact, simply because the contact is shared and without any evidence of misuse of phone or email privileges.
- USP Atwater should not delete inmates' phone and email contacts in response to disciplinary violations. It is enough that inmates might have their phone and email privileges suspended. When the contact lists are deleted and inmates must go through the process of having their contacts reapproved and added to their lists of contacts, this adds unwarranted and unsanctioned time onto the timeframe that they were been denied access to phone and email.
- Atwater, as well as the BOP in general across facilities, should provide staff with training on identifying indeterminate and determinate sentences, with a focus on the distinctions in those sentencing schemes and the course of different sentences (parole eligibility verses good time/supervised release).
- Atwater should ensure that it is providing parole eligible individuals with adequate opportunities to participate in programs, and complete specific programming that has been recommended by the Parole Commission.
- The BOP should review its internal display of inmate sentences to ensure that case managers are able to clearly distinguish determinate from indeterminate sentences, and identify those who are or will be parole eligible.
- Atwater should review facility policies and practices to ensure that policies clearly state what hygiene items inmates are to be given, when they are to be dispensed, and what items inmates can purchase. Atwater should also ensure that in practice, inmates are given hygiene products, cleaning products, and have access to laundry services in accordance with facility policies, including the A&O Handbook.
- Based on the inmate interviews and reports, Atwater should review its medical emergency response policies to ensure that inmates are able to alert staff to medical, and other, emergencies, and that staff takes timely and appropriated actions to those alerts.
- Based on inmate interviews and reports, the CIC recommends that Atwater ensure that inmates have access to writing utensils that allow them to complete all processes and procedures to which they are entitled, with particular focus on inmates' ability to complete grievance forms.
- Based on inmate interviews and reports, the CIC recommends that Atwater reassess its choice to close three general housing units, with particular focus on not holding inmates who are serving disciplinary sanctions in the SHU for longer than their sanction lengths.
- Continue to offer programming on the Challenge unit during lockdowns when possible, by limiting lockdowns to specific areas or units in the facility.
- Ensure that case managers are available on the Challenge unit to meet with inmates and plan for release and reentry.

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## Introduction

United States Penitentiary (USP) Atwater (hereinafter, USP Atwater or Atwater) is a high security federal facility located in Atwater, California. The facility shares grounds with a minimum-security federal prison camp and an air force base.<sup>1</sup> The rated capacity of the facility is 1,008 inmates. At the time of the CIC inspection, there were a total of 1,290 inmates, 30 of whom were DC Code offenders. The inmate-to-staff ratio was 3 to 1.

The CIC inspected USP Atwater on April 11 and 12, 2018. The inspection of the facility included an opening session with the warden and executive staff, a facility tour, informal conversations with staff working in different facility departments, confidential interviews with inmates, document review, and a closeout session with the warden. For the duration of the tour, CIC staff members were escorted by Atwater staff including the case management coordinator, the health services administrator, and the reentry affairs coordinator. Report findings are based on facility documents collected prior to the inspection, staff comments and reflections made during the inspection, and inmate feedback gathered through survey responses and interviews. For a full explanation of the report methods, see Appendix A. The CIC extends its appreciation to the Atwater staff who guided the inspection, as well as to the warden for being transparent about facility practices, during the opening and closing sessions.

## Facility Overview

As part of the Atwater inspection, the CIC toured the majority of the facility grounds and talked to staff in each area. The units and departments toured, brief descriptions of units and departments, relevant characteristics, and DC specific information can be found in the chart below.

**Figure 1: Atwater Inspection Summary**

Unit/Department	Atwater Specific	Brief Description	DC Specific
<b>General Population Housing Units</b>	Atwater has a total of 6 general population housing pods, each with two sides, A and B.	At the time of the inspection units 2B, 5A, and 5B, were closed, because, according to staff, the beds were not needed.	The CIC received several comments throughout the inspection, particularly from inmates in SHU, that their transfers from SHU to general population were delayed because there were not enough beds for them in general population housing units. <i>See Operational Highlights (p. 22-23) and Appendix B (p. B xxi-B xxii) for more information.</i>
<b>Special Housing Unit (SHU)</b>	• DC Population April 11/12: 6	The SHU is a higher security unit where inmates are housed for disciplinary issues, administrative purposes, protective custody, etc. <sup>2</sup>	The CIC interviewed 13 inmates who were, or had previously been in the SHU. <i>See Operational Highlights (p. 23-23) and Appendix B (p. B xxi-B xxii) for more information.</i>

<sup>1</sup> The Atwater Camp has a total capacity of 144 inmates. There were no DC inmates at the camp at the time of the inspection.

<sup>2</sup> See U.S. DEPT OF JUSTICE, FED. BUREAU OF PRISONS, Program Statement: *Special Housing Units* (Aug. 1, 2011), [https://www.bop.gov/policy/progstat/5270\\_010.pdf](https://www.bop.gov/policy/progstat/5270_010.pdf).



<b>SHU Step Down</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DC Population April 11/12: 1</li> </ul>	Staff explained that unit 1A was converted from a general population unit to a unit that functions as a step down from the SHU. While general population units are open, on 1A there are floor to ceiling bars in front of each range of cells.	The CIC was unable to interview the inmate who was in unit 1A during the interview portion of the inspection.
<b>Reintegration Housing Unit (RHU)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity of Unit: 80</li> <li>• Population April 11/12: 72</li> <li>• DC Population April 11/12: 0</li> </ul>	'The RHU is a specialized unit created as an alternative to traditional segregated housing, targeted to "male inmates identified as verified or unverified protective custody cases." <sup>3</sup>	At the time of the CIC inspection, there were no DC inmates participating in the RHU program. <i>See Operational Highlights (p. 23-24) for more info about RHU.</i>
<b>Challenge Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity of Unit: 128</li> <li>• Population April 11/12: 126</li> <li>• Capacity of Program: 60</li> <li>• DC Population April 11/12: 9</li> </ul>	The challenge program is targeted toward inmates with "substance abuse problems and/or mental illnesses," and provides cognitive-behavioral treatment in a modified therapeutic environment. <sup>4</sup>	<i>See Operational Highlights (p. 24-25), for more information about DC inmates' experience in the Atwater Challenge Program.</i>
<b>Medical/Dental</b>	Care Level 1	Individuals designated as MCL I are generally healthy and have limited medical needs. <sup>5</sup>	<i>See Appendix B (p. B iii-B v), for relevant survey responses and inmate comments.</i>
<b>Mental Health</b>	Care Level 1	The facility is equipped to house and care for inmates who are generally healthy, but may have stable-mental health conditions that can be managed by clinician evaluation every six months. <sup>6</sup> Psychology programming at the facility includes: Mindfulness based cognitive therapy, Criminal thinking and basic cognitive skills, screening for BOP Residential Drug Abuse Program (RDAP) and sex offender programs.	<i>See Appendix B (p. B vi-B viii), for relevant survey responses and inmate comments.</i>
<b>Education</b>	Atwater offers inmates basic academic and vocational programming.	Courses offered at the facility on Saturdays and Sundays, include forklift workshop, influence, marketing, the art of public speaking, Investment, commercial driver's license (CDL) classes. There are also a number of educational classes available through DVD/CD instruction.	Overall, DC inmates reported very few educational opportunities at the facility, and classes that are available have been interrupted by frequent facility lockdowns. <i>See Appendix B (p. B xvi-B xvii), for relevant survey responses and inmate comments.</i>
<b>Recreation</b>	Atwater offers inmates outdoor and indoor recreational opportunities.	As stated by staff, the goal of the facility is for inmates to have 90 minutes of recreation, daily. Classes offered during recreation are inmate led – and those who lead are paid €25 per hour. Activities include health and wellness, hobby craft, music (guitar/drums), ping pong, chess, checkers, painting, beading, crotchet, basketball, soccer, softball, volleyball, etc.	<i>See Appendix B (p. Bi-B iii), for relevant survey responses and inmate comments.</i>

<sup>3</sup> U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, FED. BUREAU OF PRISONS, *Operations Memorandum: Reintegration Housing Unit (RHU) Activation Procedures* 1, [https://www.bop.gov/policy/om/003\\_2016.pdf](https://www.bop.gov/policy/om/003_2016.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> FED. BUREAU OF PRISONS, *Directory of National Programs* 10 (Nov. 21, 2016), available at [https://www.bop.gov/inmates/custody\\_and\\_care/docs/BOPNationalProgramCatalog.pdf](https://www.bop.gov/inmates/custody_and_care/docs/BOPNationalProgramCatalog.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Example conditions include medication-controlled diabetes, epilepsy, and emphysema. For additional information on Medical Care Levels, see FED. BUREAU OF PRISONS, U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, *Legal Resource Guide to the Federal Bureau of Prisons* (2014), [http://www.bop.gov/resources/pdfs/legal\\_guide.pdf](http://www.bop.gov/resources/pdfs/legal_guide.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> See DC CORRECTIONS INFORMATION COUNCIL, *CIC Information Sheet: BOP – Mental Health Care Levels*, <https://cic.dc.gov/page/cic-info-sheets>.



<b>Reentry</b>	Reentry topics are BOP designated; however, Atwater can tailor the specific classes that it offers in each topic area.	Atwater staff explained that they prioritize offering “model courses:” those that are empirically valid and tested. Most reentry programming focuses on reentry and vocation. An example of one course is ROPE, which is a three-day program that covers a snapshot of what to think about as one is approaching reentry.	<i>See Appendix B (p. B xvi-B xvi), for relevant survey responses and inmate comments.</i>
<b>UNICOR</b>	The UNICOR program at Atwater is electronic recycling (dismantling electronics for individual parts).	UNICOR is the highest paying job at USP Atwater, starting at €23 and maxing at \$1.00. Inmates can earn between \$50 and \$150 per month. At the time of the CIC inspection there were 68 USP inmates with UNICOR jobs; however, work does not occur during facility lockdowns or modified lockdowns.	<i>See Appendix B (p. B xvi-B xvii), for relevant survey responses and inmate comments.</i>

In addition to the physical inspection, Atwater staff provided the CIC with a number of facility documents, a full list of which can be found in Appendix A. The documents included logs of the Administrative Remedy Program, or grievance process, requests documented at the facility in 2017.<sup>7</sup> See the chart below for a summary of grievances submitted, rejected, filed, answered, and granted.

**Figure 2: Summary of Atwater Administrative Remedy Program, 2017**

Level of Remedy Request	Number Submitted	Number Rejected	Number Filed	Number Answered	Number Granted	Issues of Granted Grievances
<i>Request of Administrative Remedy (BP-9)</i>	368	172	196	194	6	- UDC/RRC actions (3) - Operations/institution (2) - Mental health care (1)
<i>Administrative Remedy Appeal (BP-10)</i>	378	165	213	108	3	- DHO/CDC/Cont. Housing appeal (3)
<i>Appeal to General Council (BP-11)</i>	111	82	29	26	0	- N/A

*\*Administrative Remedy logs were provided by Atwater staff and can be found on file with the CIC.*

<sup>7</sup> For more information about the Administrative Remedy Program, *See* DC CORRECTIONS INFORMATION COUNCIL, *CIC Information Sheet: FBOP - Administrative Remedy Program*, [https://cic.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cic/page\\_content/attachments/BOP%20Administrative%20Remedies%2011.15.17%20REVISED.pdf](https://cic.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cic/page_content/attachments/BOP%20Administrative%20Remedies%2011.15.17%20REVISED.pdf).

## Atwater Highlights

The following section highlights aspects of Atwater that are specific and unique to the facility. These highlights relate to the daily operations and functions of the facility, as well as their impact on DC inmates in particular. The information in this section was primarily gathered during the opening session with Atwater executive staff, as well as during inmate interviews.

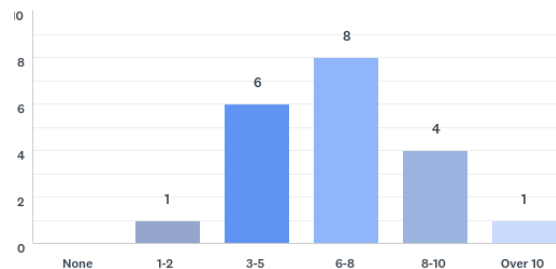
### *I. Facility Lockdowns*

*Prior to the inspection, during the opening session, and through inmate interviews, the CIC learned that there were frequent facility lockdowns throughout the past year (counting back from April 2018), that affected access to programming and communication.*

Facility lockdowns are significant because inmates are confined to their cells, and thus are unable to participate in work, education programs, and recreational activities. When asked in the opening session about the frequency of lockdowns, staff said that in the first two years of warden's tenure, there was one lockdown; however, in the past eight months there had been four lockdowns. Documentation provided by the BOP prior to the inspection, indicated that there were nine facility lockdowns in 2017 (one in March, two in May, two in October, two in November, and two in December). Staff gave reasons for the more recent lockdowns as the following: one was in response to an escape, two were in response to staff members being attacked with weapons, and one followed a fight between the Sureños and black inmates. At the time of the inspection, Atwater was transitioning from a lockdown back to normal functioning, such that it was in a state of "modified lockdown," where inmates were allowed out of their cells on their housing units. Atwater staff also noted that DC inmates were not specifically involved in the situations leading to the lockdowns.

As part of the interviews with DC code offenders, the CIC asked individuals to recall the numbers of lockdowns in the year leading up to the inspection, as well as the reasons for those lockdowns. The majority of the responses aligned with facility reports in terms of reasons for lockdowns. Of note, many lockdowns were in response to fights between small numbers of people, as opposed to facility-wide incidents. Individuals also commented on the consequences of facility lockdowns, in terms of daily life. See responses below.

**Figure 3: Can you recall how many times in the past 12 months the facility has been on lockdown?**  
N= 20



**Figure 4: Reasons for Atwater Lockdowns**

Inmate Responses
Escape, violence, assaults, staff assault. The warden is creating a subtle undercurrent of tension.
Alterations and rumors.
Fights.
Small incidents like fights – any fight: scuffles, officers provoking/harassing inmates.
August 2017 – We came off lockdown; October 2017 – an inmate assaulted staff; January 2018 – too many fights. There was also an escape. With the lockdowns, at times there have also been cell searches, no commissary, no clean linens, and no stamps for weeks.
Various incidents – escapes, fights, petty stuff.
Somebody tried to escape from here, a lot of fights, and an inmate attacked an officer.
Different incidents – fights, altercations with the CO's, escape.
Fighting (Mexicans vs. Blacks) and shakedowns.
Fights, administrative reasons, assaults on staff.
Alleged Staff assaults, inmate on inmate assaults, supposedly shortage of staff, supposedly a window that was cracked, staff anniversaries, major of minor shakedowns.
One was an inmate escape, three months later a staff member called an inmate a bitch and the inmate attacked the officer, a couple times for fights, a window that was broken, shortage of staff, and someone was at the door of a unit that he did not live in.
Violence with staff and inmates.
Racial issues.
Stupid stuff that we shouldn't be locked down for.
Anything.
Officers and inmates alike talking trash to people not knowing who the person is or the person's mental state.

*\*Answers were collected from open-ended survey questions and interview questions. Each cell represents comments from one inmate.*

**Figure 5: Additional Comments Regarding Atwater Lockdowns**

Comment	Number of Inmates who Commented
It is difficult to communicate with home because of the lockdowns.	5
Lockdowns prevent programming.	5
Lack of access to books, commissary items, and commissary spending cap on lockdown.	4
In the past 12 months and we've been on lockdown about seven to nine months.	3
There are too many lockdowns.	2
Inmates get two shower a week during lockdowns.	2
This institution remains in a perpetual state of full lockdown.	1
Prevented from moving from SHU because of lockdowns.	1
Lockdowns slow grievance process.	1

*\*Answers were collected from open-ended survey questions and interview questions.*

### ***CIC Recommendations***

- When lockdowns are necessary, Atwater should consider restricting lockdowns to the unit where a specific incident occurred. For example, if there is a fight or altercation between two people on one unit, the facility should only lockdown that unit or the individuals involved, for as short a time as possible.
- Atwater should consider other options for continuing programs, work, and recreation during lockdowns.

## ***II. Inmate Financial Responsibility Program***

*Prior to the inspection, during the opening session, and through inmate interviews, the CIC learned that inmates who do not make payments required under the Inmate Financial Responsibility Program (FRP), have their inmate accounts frozen. Many DC inmates reported having FRP payments greater than the \$25 that is typically charged per payment in other BOP facilities.*

In reference to FRP payments, the BOP explains that it,

“encourages each sentenced inmate to meet his or her legitimate financial obligations. As part of the initial classification process, staff will assist the inmate in developing a financial plan for meeting those obligations, and at subsequent program reviews, staff shall consider the inmate’s efforts to fulfill those obligations as indicative of that individual’s acceptance and demonstrated level responsibility.”<sup>8</sup>

In determining an inmate’s payment amount, the unit team considers payments due under the Judgment and Commitment Order (J & C), special assessments imposed under 18 USC 3013, court-ordered restitution, fines and court costs, state or local court obligations (such as child support), and other federal government obligations (such as student loans or tax liabilities).<sup>9</sup>

Inmate payments are made from institutional or non-institutional (community) resources.<sup>10</sup> In determining the amount that an inmate is expected to pay per payment period, the unit team completes an initial assessment based on the following calculation:

- 1) Determine the total funds (institutional/non-institutional) in the inmate’s trust fund account the previous six months;
- 2) Subtract from that amount \$450 (\$75 per week), which is excluded to allow the inmate to better maintain telephone communication.<sup>11</sup>

There is a reassessment of an inmate’s ability to pay, and amount to be paid, every six months. Inmates at Atwater are able to pay monthly or quarterly, depending on what is determined in their initial assessment. Individuals who have lower total amounts due are often encouraged to complete the full payment in one lump sum payment, when possible.<sup>12</sup>

If at any point an inmate indicates to staff that they are not going to make FRP payments, and they do not make those payments, they are put on a “Refuse” status. One consequence of that status is that the inmate may be subject to a monthly commissary spending limitation that is more stringent than the typical limitation.<sup>13</sup> Atwater staff explained that they refer to this spending limitation as “encumbering” inmates’ accounts. According to the BOP program statement, the commissary spending limit is not meant to apply to purchases of stamps, telephone credits, or the purchase of

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<sup>8</sup> FED. BUREAU OF PRISONS, U.S. DEP’T OF JUSTICE, *Program Statement: Financial Responsibility Program, Inmate 1* (Aug. 15 2005), [https://www.bop.gov/policy/progstat/5380\\_008.pdf](https://www.bop.gov/policy/progstat/5380_008.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> See *id.* at 4-6.

<sup>10</sup> See *id.* at 8.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.* “In ordinary situations, an inmate will be considered to have limited resources when he or she does not have enough institution earning or trust fund account deposits to make a minimum IFRP payment of \$25 per quarter” *Id.* at 4.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.* at 10.

<sup>13</sup> *Id.* at 11-13.

Kosher or Halal food.<sup>14</sup> If an inmate is put on “Refuse” status, they are to be notified of the status change, have the consequences of the status explained to them, and this notification and discussion must be documented.

Atwater staff explained that individuals from DC tend to have lower FRP payments, typically around \$50-\$100 in total, because court fines and restitution are lower and less frequent in the DC jurisdiction, when compared to federal jurisdictions. Staff said that the majority of inmates pay around \$25 per payment. At most BOP facilities, the typical payment is \$25 per payment.

During inmate interviews, the CIC asked individuals to reflect on the FRP payments made at Atwater. Many inmates reported being placed on Refuse status in addition to receiving other sanctions, for failing to make payments. Seven inmates reflected that their Atwater payment amounts have been for more than \$25 per payment. Additionally, four inmates reflected that their J&Cs say that FRP payments should only be deducted from institutional wages or prison pay. See the chart below for DC inmates’ comments regarding FRP payments at Atwater.

**Figure 6: Experiences with Atwater FRP Payments**

Inmate Responses
I once had to pay \$100 in one month.
My payments have been \$50, \$40, \$50 – three payments per quarter.
I was put on Refuse status – I cannot buy labels for legal mail, no phone, no law library computer. They said that it was part of a DHO sanction, but the payment should be separate for court fines. I wrote a grievance to the region but did not get a response. The J+C says that the fine is supposed to be paid only from prison work. They tried to make me pay \$85 a month, when other people are paying \$25 a quarter.
I missed a \$50 payment and was told that if I did not make the payment, I would lose my transfer when the transfer came, and I was told that I would not make more than \$5 per month.
They tried to say that I wasn’t paying at my other facilities, and so I have to pay back-pay.
I was working in UNICOR, and they took half my pay for the payment.
Right now I owe \$250, but have none of it due to no family support.
They take money from me that my family sends me for my well-being. When the judge ordered in my judgment and commitment that I’m only to pay this fine of FRP according to my “prison pay,” meaning income that I make from having a prison job. But USP Atwater doesn’t like to hire people to work as they are supposed to, and for inmates they do hire, their pay is cut short.
These people at USP Atwater has been extorting me for \$75 a month not even before I had a job or went to A&O. They just got slick and drop it to \$40 this month I guess because they know that y’all were inquiring about it.
I was put on FRP refusal status at Atwater, and my account was encumbered.
If you don’t pay FRP payments, Atwater encumbers your account.
I transferred facilities: at my old facility my FRP payment was \$25 every three months, and at Atwater, it is \$65 every three months. My J&C order says FRP funds should only be taken from “institutional wages.”
At my old facility my FRP payment was \$25 per payment period but at Atwater I was told to pay \$100. My J&C says that payments should be based on my prison job.
My FRP Payments are \$25 per month, if you do not make a payment, Atwater freezes commissary and erase all contacts (phone/email).
My J&C order says that funds should only be taken from my “institutional wages.”

*\*Answers were collected from open-ended survey questions and interview questions. Each cell represents comments from one inmate.*

<sup>14</sup> *Id.* at 12. Additional effects of refusal to participate in the IFRP include: notifying the parole commission when applicable; ineligibility to receive furlough; non-receipt of performance pay above the maintenance pay level, bonus pay, or vacation pay; non-assignment to any work detail outside the secure perimeter of the facility; housing in the lowest housing status; inability to be placed in a community-based program; non-receipt of incentives for participation in residential drug treatment programs; or a score of “zero” on the “Responsibility” section of the custody classification form. *Id.* at 11-13.

### *CIC Recommendations*

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- At least four DC inmates commented that their J&Cs indicate that FRP payments are only to be made from institutional wages/prison job, rather than community funds (money that inmates' families send to them). Based on these comments, the CIC recommends that DC and the BOP work together to ensure that the J&Cs of DC code offenders are followed, or at least, taken into consideration by BOP officials and staff.
- At other BOP facilities, FRP payments are generally kept around \$25 per payment. While Atwater is within the bounds of the BOP program statement by charging more than \$25 per payment, this does not align with the general practice of BOP facilities. The CIC recommends that the Atwater follows the practice of other BOP facilities in typically charging \$25 per payment. Additionally, the CIC recommends that the BOP review its FRP policy, in light of facilities' common practices. Based on these practices, it may be appropriate to cap FRP payments at approximately \$25 per payment.

### *III. Disciplinary Process*

*The CIC received numerous comments regarding the disciplinary process at Atwater, primarily in reference to the severity of sanctions. Sanctions at Atwater were said to often include monetary fines, loss of commissary, loss of phone use, loss of email, loss of visits, and having phone and email contact lists deleted.*

In accordance with BOP policy the following are examples of sanctions that are available following a disciplinary violation:<sup>15</sup> monetary fines, disciplinary segregation, and loss of privileges.<sup>16</sup> Monetary fines were of specific concern to DC inmates who were interviewed at Atwater. Generally, the dollar amount of a monetary fine depends on the severity of the offense. The scale is laid out below:

- Low Severity Level Offense: fine up to \$50, or 12.5% of the inmate's trust fund balance;
- Moderate Severity Level Offense: fine up to \$100, or 25% of the inmate's trust fund balance;
- High Severity Level Offense: fine up to \$300, or 50% of the inmate's trust fund balance; and
- Greatest Severity Level Offense: fine up to \$500, or 75% of the inmate's trust fund balance.<sup>17</sup>

Atwater staff explained that if an inmate is sanctioned with a monetary fine, staff does not take money out of the inmate's account unless or until the inmate consents in writing. However, Atwater staff also explained that at the facility, if an inmate does not sign the consent form allowing the money for the fined amount to be taken out of his account, a hold for that amount of money is

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<sup>15</sup> Prior to the inspection, as part of a document request, Atwater staff provided the CIC with the total count and break down of documented prohibited acts from January 2017 – December 2017. Out of 1,362 total incidents, the following types of acts (870 in total) were the most common: Phone Abuse – Disrupt Monitoring (165); Refusing to Obey an Order (134); Refusing Work/Program Assignment (121); Engaging in Group Demonstration (109); Possessing Drugs/Alcohol (100); Assaulting without Serious Injury (82); Fighting with Another Person (80); Possessing a Dangerous Weapon (97). *Prohibited Act Rates were provided by Atwater staff, and can be found on file with the CIC.*

<sup>16</sup> FED. BUREAU OF PRISONS, U.S. DEPT OF JUSTICE, *Program Statement: Inmate Discipline Program 6* (Aug. 1 2011), [https://www.bop.gov/policy/progstat/5270\\_009.pdf](https://www.bop.gov/policy/progstat/5270_009.pdf). Other available sanction include recommendation for parole date recession or retardation, forfeiture of good time, disallowance of good conduct time, monetary restitution, change of housing quarters, loss of job, impounding of inmate's personal property,, confiscation of contraband, restriction to quarters, and extra duty. *See id.*

<sup>17</sup> *Id.*

placed on the account. Effectively, even if the inmate does not consent to the money being taken from his account, he is still unable to access it.

The CIC asked inmates to comment on their experience with the disciplinary process at Atwater. Seven of 13 responses made note of disciplinary fines or account encumbrances following a sanction. See the figure below for DC inmates' reflections on their experiences with the disciplinary process at Atwater.

**Figure 7: Experiences with the Atwater Disciplinary Process**

Inmate Responses
Everyone confined at this facility “knows” that disciplinary procedures here are a joke. You’re guilty before you walk in there. Also, the warden has a system in place here where they encumber (deny you access to) everything; no commissary, no phone, no email, this is before you see the DHO and most times you don’t even have an incident report. So basically, they are systematically tramping over due process. They freeze your account as part of the disciplinary process, and it feels like retaliation.
You can never win, you will always be guilty because you are an inmate.
Everyone gets punished from the actions of one.
I have paid disciplinary fines three times - \$40, \$50, and \$40.
They have always been very, very biased, and most of the time the staff does not care about the policy.
They are extreme no matter what, sanctions always involve monetary fines, and for one shot they give you every sanction. For one 300 series infraction, the sanction included a \$30 fine, loss of phone privileges, loss of commissary, loss of email privileges, and loss of visitation.
They are fair.
The disciplinary hearing officer is very biased towards inmates and never bases findings off of being fair and partial, because of the relationship that’s shared with staff personnel. I was sent to SHU after a DHO hearing, but I was not allowed to submit a written statement and was not allowed to have witnesses. Also, USP Atwater has serious problems with extorting inmates out of the funds at DHO hearings. It’s often that sanctions consist of loss of inmate funds from his inmate account.
I was just recently written up and found guilty about two situations that are not true. I have been stereotyped, discriminated against, etc. because I’m from Washington, DC.
They’re extorting us by charging our account for everything, on top of other punitive infractions. Then when we fail to pay the “fines” from lack of “income” because there are no jobs available or our jobs are not paying “proper wages,” they are “freezing” our accounts, making it so we are unable to call our family and it moves us to other housing units, also interrupting the ability to program.
They are extorting inmates out of the money under the guise of saying it is a fine, and if you refuse to sign over your money after a DHO hearing, your account is frozen.
I didn’t pay a fine and had a \$25 spending limit, no use of phones, no access to law library, and I could not get labels for legal mail.
I was charged \$200 from the warden at Atwater, for a disciplinary infraction that occurred at my previous facility. I paid the money so I could get out of the SHU.

*\*Answers were collected from open-ended survey questions and interview questions. Each cell represents comments from one inmate.*

### ***CIC Recommendations***

- USP Atwater should use sanctions that are proportionate to and targeted toward the type of disciplinary incident that an inmate was found guilty of. The disciplinary process loses legitimacy and effectiveness when all sanctions are levied in response to any level of disciplinary violation, or when sanctions are imposed without a finding of culpability.



#### IV. Phone and Email Regulations on Inmate Contacts

*During the opening session and in interviews with inmates, the CIC received reports that inmates have had the names and contact information of family and friends deleted off of their phone and email lists, making it extremely difficult to stay in touch with their loved ones.*

Based on comments from staff and inmates, the CIC understands that inmates are at risk of having their phone and email contact lists deleted, when they and another inmate, in the same facility or generally in BOP custody, have a contact name and information in common. During the opening session, when asked why Atwater was in the practice of deleting inmates' phone and email contacts, staff explained that they believed phones and email were being "manipulated" to solicit drugs into the facility. According to staff, narcotic introduction starts with communication, and therefore with the communication and contact policies, the facility is trying to target communication that is made to solicit drugs. Atwater staff further explained that by monitoring for and targeting shared contacts, the goal was discourage inmates from adding contacts to their lists, on behalf of other inmates who may want to solicit drugs. Staff said that on a case-by case basis, inmates can have the same contacts on their lists. Staff also clarified that contacts that are "legitimate"— such as legal organizations, government agencies, etc. – are allowed to be on the contact lists of multiple inmates.

When asked about communication, many inmates indicated that they have had their contact lists cleared, but do not know the reasons for the deletions because they were not predated by an incident report or documentation. See the figure below for feedback from DC inmates regarding communication, deletion of their contacts, and the circumstances under which those deletions occurred.

**Figure 8: DC Inmate Comments Regarding the Loss of Email and Phone Contacts**

Inmate Responses
'This is the only institution in the BOP that I know of that will encumber (block all access) to phone, email, and commissary, when you do not even get an incident report.
Visitation is 100% discouraged at every institution and they don't want people to visit.
Since being in Atwater, for about 100 days, I have not had access to phones, email, commissary, or haircuts. I don't know why I don't have access. My phone and email contact lists were also wiped.
We need more affordable calls and to not have to wait one hour between calls. I had the same contact as someone who is also in BOP custody, and the contact was deleted from my list. So to talk to my family members, I have to ask them to change their phone numbers. Also, with the new mail policies, you can no longer get even a birthday card – you just get a photocopy of what your family sent.
'They arbitrarily shut off our email and phone privileges without any incident report sanctions.
'They are removing all your contacts from email.
I lost contact with my family and friends when my contact list was erased, and I didn't have a copy.
My family member and I have the same person on our contact lists, but now we cannot both have the contact.
By being unprofessional and spiteful staff personnel make it hard to communicate with my family, because they cut off my inmate account and turned my telephone off for no reason.
Yes, I have my phone privileges, these people have yet to approve numbers that I submitted numerous times on my list. I haven't used a phone in a year, and I have money to call.

*\*Answers were collected from open-ended survey questions and interview questions. Each cell represents comments from one inmate.*

## CIC Recommendations

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- USP Atwater should not clear contact lists when inmates have a shared contact, simply because the contact is shared and without any evidence of misuse of phone or email privileges.
- USP Atwater should not delete inmates' phone and email contacts in response to disciplinary violations. It is enough that inmates might have their phone and email privileges suspended. When the contact lists are deleted and inmates must go through the process of having their contacts reapproved and added to their lists of contacts, this adds unwarranted and unsanctioned time onto the timeframe that they were been denied access to phone and email.

### **V. Book and Mail Policy**

*Prior to inspection, during the opening session, and in interviews with inmates, the CIC learned that Atwater implemented policies to restrict the sources from which reading material and mail enters the facility. More specifically, the policies designated that books had to be ordered through the prison, and that general mail from family could not be on colored paper, contain marker, crayon, stickers, lipstick, etc. Since the inspection, the BOP rescinded facility policies that added such restrictions to the purchase of reading material.*

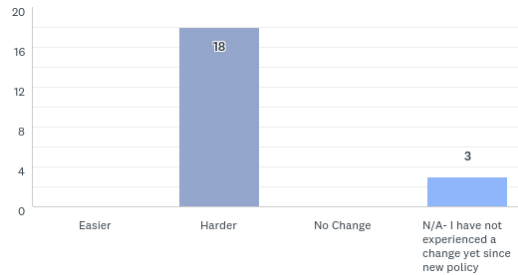
In the opening session, Atwater staff explained that preceding the increased restrictions on books and mail, there was an increase in the infiltration and use of synthetic drugs, such that dramatic measures needed to be taken by the facility to reduce incoming drugs, mainly through restrictions on social mail and incoming books. The mail policy was implemented September 11, 2017 following a period where the facility found drugs in incoming mail, about two or three times per week. The new policy designates the following criteria for acceptable social mail: white paper/white envelopes only, no perfume, no discoloration from liquid, no labels, stamps are removed before mail is given to inmates, and photo copies of greeting cards are given to inmates.

In addition, facility staff reported that they believed another source of drugs to be from incoming books ordered by and sent to inmates – even when coming directly from the seller. Atwater staff speculated that family members of an inmate might buy a book from a retailer, take the book out of the store, place drugs in the book, bring in back to the store, and ask the store to send the book to the inmate directly. From September 11, 2017 - May 3, 2018, inmates could only buy books through commissary. Book purchase requests had to be submitted to and processed by the Trust Fund Specialist. Atwater charged an additional 30% of the cost of books ordered from commissary. The 30% mark-up was said to not apply to religious or educational materials. See the figures below for DC inmates' comments regarding the impact of the book restrictions.

Following the inspection, the CIC contacted other BOP institutions to ask whether they had also implemented book policies that restricted sellers and increased prices for inmates. The CIC found that Victorville FCC (policy effective January 23, 2018) and Coleman FCC (policy effective May 14, 2018), also implemented restrictions on incoming books and publications, similar to Atwater's

policy.<sup>18</sup> On Thursday May 3, 2018 the BOP issued a statement revoking institutionally implemented additional restrictions on incoming publications.<sup>19</sup>

**Figure 9: With Atwater's new book policy, have you experienced a change in the way you receive books?**  
N=21



**Figure 10: If your experience has changed for better or worse in regard to the book policy, please describe how it has changed:**

Inmate Responses
We are being extorted – there is a mark up and we must go through the warden to get the books.
For religious purposes, I teach other inmates Arabic, and the 30% markup on books isn't helping. I have requested a book three times and haven't gotten an answer.
It has been worse for me, because at the moment the Imam (leader) of the Muslim community and I need books in order to lead, teach, and guide.
I'm paying 30% more for books now from commissary. No hardcovers allowed: they made me send books home and rip covers off.
They are said to be very picky and you get charged.
I used to get around three to four books a month, now it takes about a month to get a book.
It has been a problem because that's how I have been getting through with my time.
We now have to pay 30% more for books.
I haven't been able to obtain any recent reading material due to high cost.
A lot of things have been stopped from coming in.
I have not able to receive books.
They are extorting us to get books by charging a 30% mark up to get the books.
It's been worse.
My experience has changed for the worse because books have to be ordered through the company chosen by warden, plus 30% extra has to be paid of what books cost, plus you have to pay for shipping and handling.
I'm in college and told that the mark up doesn't apply to education material. Wrong. They were getting ready to send my school books back to the college because they did not order it.
It has changed for the worse, due to the fact that I am being charged or extorted for a 30% mark up on the price.
It's "extortion" at it's best, we have to purchase books from a vendor they provide with a 30% mark-up.

*\*Answers were collected from open-ended survey questions and interview questions. Each cell represents comments from one inmate.*

## VI. Transfers to Atwater

*Prior to the Atwater inspection, through correspondence with sentenced DC code offenders, the CIC learned that many DC inmates are transferred to USP Atwater as a disciplinary measure.*

In the opening session with staff, the CIC asked Atwater executive staff about the circumstances under which the majority of transfers of DC Code offenders to Atwater occur. Staff described that typically, DC inmates are transferred to Atwater following disciplinary or behavior issues at other

<sup>18</sup> See DC CORRECTIONS INFORMATION COUNCIL, *CIC Information Sheet, Additional Restrictions for Incoming Publications*, [https://cic.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cic/page\\_content/attachments/Additional%20Restrictions%20for%20Incoming%20Publications\\_1.pdf](https://cic.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cic/page_content/attachments/Additional%20Restrictions%20for%20Incoming%20Publications_1.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

facilities. Staff also explained that following 18 months of clear conduct, an inmate's behavioral adjustment and security point score (which corresponds to placement in a facility of a certain security level) are to be reviewed, in order to assess whether or not the inmate's security score can be lowered so that he may be transferred to a lower security facility.<sup>20</sup>

When asked about the reasons for their transfers to USP Atwater, 12 out of 20 respondents indicated that they were transferred for a disciplinary issue, the majority of which did not follow a formal sanction. See the figure below for a summary of the reasons for which interviewed DC inmates were transferred to Atwater.

**Figure 11: Inmates' Reported Reasons for transfer to Atwater**

Issues Reported	Inmates who Reported (N=20)
Following disciplinary issues that were not necessarily formally sanctioned.	10
No reason given/don't know.	6
Protective custody.	2
Following a disciplinary infraction at a different facility.	2

*\*Answers were collected from open-ended survey questions and interview questions.*

## VII. Parole

*The CIC received a number of concerns from Atwater inmates that their unit teams do not understand their DC sentences, and therefore do not provide adequate opportunities to participate in programs that would assist in their chances of being granted parole. Some also reflected that they do not have adequate opportunities to meet with the parole board.*

Following the enactment of the D.C. Revitalization Act of 1997,<sup>21</sup> the DC criminal sentencing structure changed from system of indeterminate sentences – where sentences included a minimum term, maximum term, and parole eligibility – to a system of determinate sentences – where sentences are a fixed amount of time with the opportunity for good time, followed by a period of supervised release. Offences that occurred after August 4, 2000 fall under the determinate sentencing structure. Individuals whose sentences fall under the indeterminate sentencing structure, are parole eligible after serving the minimum term set in their sentence. The U.S. Parole Commission has discretion to grant eligible individuals parole, following a parole grant hearing. During the parole grant hearing, in making a decision to grant or deny, the Parole Commission considers pre-incarceration factors (or criminal history and current offense factors), as well as post-incarceration factors, which include institutional behavior and discipline, and achievement in prison programming or work assignments.

The CIC received a number of concerns about the parole grant process. One issue described by inmates sentenced prior to 2000 who have parole eligibility dates, is that when unit case managers look up their sentences, the case managers only see the “back number.” For instance, if an inmate has a minimum of 20 years, and a maximum of life, all the case manager sees is life. Many inmates

<sup>20</sup> For more information about the BOP inmate classification system, see FED. BUREAU OF PRISONS, U.S. DEPT OF JUSTICE, *Program Statement: Inmate Security Designation and Custody Classification* (Sept. 12, 2006), [https://www.bop.gov/policy/progstat/5100\\_008.pdf](https://www.bop.gov/policy/progstat/5100_008.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> National Capital Revitalization and Self-Government Improvement Act of 1997, Pub. L. No. 105-33, 111 Stat. 712 (1997) (“DC Revitalization Act”).

said that when case managers see “life” they assume that this is part of a determinate sentence, rather than an indeterminate sentence. Additionally, other inmates commented that being housed in a system where the majority of inmates have a determinate sentence, is a detriment to them, because there is less incentive for the facility to provide programs, because the majority of inmates do not have need to show the parole board programming achievements. Finally, another issue specific to Atwater, was that due to the frequent lockdowns, parole eligible inmates are stalled in completing programs that the parole board has advised them to complete. See the figure below for DC inmates’ comments regarding their parole related experiences.

**Figure 12: DC Inmates Experiences with Parole Grant Process**

Inmate Responses
I have an indeterminate sentence, but the BOP doesn’t understand DC sentences because they see life and think natural life, instead of indeterminate. Also, because federal sentences are one number and good time will kick in after 85%, there is no reason for the BOP to provide extensive programs. This leaves DC people in a bad place because some still go before the parole board, but then the parole board wants them to have done programs, but the programs aren’t offered. I went before the parole commission for a grant hearing in 2016 and was recommended for parole, but ultimately denied. I got a set off of three years.
I went before the parole board in 2014 and got a five-year set off.
I have a parole detainer that hinders everything – transfers, custody, etc. I have been dealing with this issue for three, four years now. The parole warrant has not been executed, and after I am done with this time, I could get another hit from the parole board. I would rather have them execute the warrant so I know if the time will be concurrent or consecutive. I have written the parole commission letters with staff documentation and documentation of completed classes, but they just sent back the letters saying “let detainer stand.” The detainer also adds seven points to my custody score, and without it I could move to an FCI.
I am supposed to see the parole board, and I have been trying to contact them to see how much time I have until my grant hearing, because I have done my minimum time, but the parole process has been held up by lockdowns.
I have completed 72 programs in my 22 years in the BOP. I went up for parole in 2016, but the parole board told me to complete the Challenge program, and I got a one year set off (although, I didn’t have a hearing in 2017). I started the challenge program at Pollock and got to Phase II. I had to restart the Challenge program at Atwater, and have not been able to move past Phase I, because the lockdowns make it so I can’t meet all of the phase requirements. I have been here for a year.

*\*Answers were collected during inmate interviews. Each cell represents comments from one inmate.*

### **CIC Recommendations**

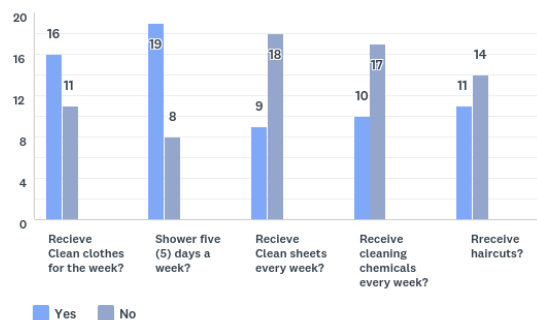
- Atwater, as well as the BOP in general across facilities, should provide staff with training on identifying indeterminate and determinate sentences, with a focus on the distinctions in those sentencing schemes and the course of different sentences (parole eligibility verses good time/supervised release).
- Atwater should ensure that it is providing parole eligible individuals with adequate opportunities to participate in programs, and complete specific programming that has been recommended by the Parole Commission.
- The BOP should review its internal display of inmate sentences to ensure that case managers are able to clearly distinguish determinate from indeterminate sentences, and identify those who are or will be parole eligible.

## VIII. Hygiene

*During the inmate interviews, and through completed surveys, numerous inmates reported that they do not receive all of the hygiene products that they should, and this issue has only been exacerbated by the facility lockdowns.*

The USP Atwater Inmate Admission & Orientation Handbook, provides inmates with knowledge of facility procedures and daily life. In a section explaining sanitation, the Handbook states that, “Toothpaste, toothbrushes, combs, razors, and soap for personal hygiene are issued by the institution. Inmates may purchase hygiene items through the Commissary.”<sup>22</sup> As part of the CIC survey, DC inmates were asked to comment on access to hygiene products and cleanliness of the facility. Five individuals specifically mentioned that the facility does not provide personal hygiene products, and at least three others suggested as much. Additionally, many inmates commented on the lack of cleaning supplies available in their units. See responses below, regarding hygiene and access to cleaning materials.

**Figure 13: Are you normally able to:**  
N=27



**Figure 14: Please provide examples of why you are satisfied or unsatisfied with the previously discussed items:**

Inmate Responses
The laundry department does not provide soap, combs, razors, etc. Other BOP institutions provide these on a monthly basis. During lockdowns we are only provided showers twice weekly. Other BOP institutions provide more showers during lockdowns: one shower after first 72 hours, then one shower every 48 hours.
They don't exchange sheets (for new ones), instead they keep washing same sheets. They also don't give us cleaning chemicals every week.
They don't hand out soap, razors, etc.
The prison stays on lockdown too damn much!
The food is terrible, units aren't too bad, but we barely get any commissary.
Whenever we are on lock down we, the inmates, do not receive the things that we are supposed to receive per the BOP policy and the constitution.
My unit– 4B – doesn't have any working water fountains. It's short on washers and dryers, and it's always flooded. Laundry is always closed. The food is trash and is not enough to feed a child.
With the perpetual lockdowns at this facility, we are often denied the basic essentials of food, hygiene, and exercise. During lockdowns we only shower twice a week.
I'm unsatisfied with these things because they are never on time or they don't allow us the opportunity to access them.
I'm unsatisfied because they don't provide anything they are supposed to. They don't give out hygiene products – when I first arrived I got a small toothpaste and one bar of soap.
I am unsatisfied because of the unsanitary issues.
I'm unsatisfied with the food and the commissary because it is not enough.

<sup>22</sup> U.S. DEPT OF JUSTICE, FED. BUREAU OF PRISONS, USP ATWATER INMATE ADMISSION & ORIENTATION HANDBOOK 6, on file with the CIC.

It's prison.
Hygiene materials are not being given to us in accordance with BOP policy, they are not supplying us with all the necessary items or supplies we are supposed to be getting. Disinfectants, laundry, soap, etc., are not passed out like they are supposed to be. Cells are cleaned with shampoo.
I wash my own stuff; I buy my own food.
Recreation is never on time.
I'm unsatisfied with not being able to receive recreation five hours weekly. I'm very dissatisfied that my account funds get encumbrance for No Reason, as well as I'm not allowed to use the telephone to call my family and I don't have any sanctions to have my phone taken away from me; whereas, I'm allowed 15 minutes a month in SHU living quarters.
The food is always too spicy, overcooked rice, under cooked meats, and we are fed like five and six year old children.
I'm unsatisfied because the focus of the staff isn't the care of the inmate, but solely to find more ways to restrict, confine, and neglect us.
I'm unsatisfied because the food portions are small and cold.
There is no soap, deodorant, or toothpaste on commissary. We are given a 10-shampoo pack a week to shower and clean our cells with, we have no deodorant and the toothpaste is no good.

*\*Answers were collected from open-ended survey questions and interview questions. Each cell represents comments from one inmate.*

### ***CIC Recommendations***

- Atwater should review facility policies and practices to ensure that policies clearly state what hygiene items inmates are to be given, when they are to be dispensed, and what items inmates can purchase. Atwater should also ensure that in practice, inmates are given hygiene products, cleaning products, and have access to laundry services in accordance with facility policies, including the A&O Handbook.

## ***IX. Special Housing Unit***

*Positive highlights from the Special Housing Unit (SHU) included, that Atwater provides SHU inmates with limited programming on one of the unit ranges. Of significant concern, however, a number of inmates reported that an inmate died on the unit, after officers failed to respond to his requests for medical assistance in a timely manner.*

The SHU is a higher security housing unit, where inmates are housed for designated time periods, with limited access to programming and little to no movement out of their cells. The Atwater SHU provides limited programming to inmates. On one of the unit ranges (or tiers), educational (GED), religious, recreational (health and nutrition), religious, psychology (anger management), and reentry programming is provided through television monitors with corresponding audio through MPS players. Across from each cell, a monitor is mounted on the wall where programming visuals are displayed, and in their cell each inmate has access to an MPS player. Inmates are also given a corresponding workbook to complete. Staff reported that a room on the ground floor of the SHU was in the process being converted to a classroom space to be used for out of cell programming.

The CIC interviewed 12 inmates who were, or had previously been in the Atwater SHU. Of particular significance, multiple inmates shared that an inmate in SHU recently died, after unit officers failed to respond to his multiple rings of the emergency button in his cell. The reporting inmates described that hours after he had first pressed the button, the man was taken out of his cell, already deceased.



There was one Spanish-speaking inmate on the unit who did not have access to Spanish materials or translation services. Additionally, one individual explained that inmates are given only a rubber pencil to write with. SHU inmates are expected to write on grievance forms – which are printed on carbon copy paper – with these rubber pencils. The CIC confirmed that attempting to write on even a single sheet of paper is nearly impossible to do with the rubber pencil.

See the chart below for inmate concerns regarding the Atwater SHU.

**Figure 15: Inmates' Reported Issues/Comments Regarding the SHU**

Inmate Responses	Inmates who Reported (N=12)
Lack of hygiene products (soap, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes).	3
Failure of staff respond to medical requests and alarms.	3
Failure of staff to respond to mental health requests.	3
Failure of staff (officers, medical, psychology) to conduct rounds.	3
Unprofessional staff conduct.	3
Poor quality of food in SHU particularly.	3
Additional time spent in SHU because of lack of bed space/lockdowns.	2
Only let out of SHU after paying FRP.	2
Phone and email contacts deleted when sent to SHU.	2
No access to commissary.	2
Lack of access to religious material.	1
In SHU with no disciplinary infraction.	1
Depressing atmosphere.	1

*\*Responses were collected from 12 inmates were in SHU at the time of the inspection, or had previously been in the Atwater SHU.*

### ***CIC Recommendations***

- Based on the inmate interviews and reports, Atwater should review its medical emergency response policies to ensure that inmates are able to alert staff to medical, and other, emergencies, and that staff takes timely and appropriated actions to those alerts.
- Based on inmate interviews and reports, the CIC recommends that Atwater ensure that inmates have access to writing utensils that allow them to complete all processes and procedures to which they are entitled, with particular focus on inmates' ability to complete grievance forms.
- Based on inmate interviews and reports, the CIC recommends that Atwater reassess its choice to close three general housing units, with particular focus on not holding inmates who are serving disciplinary sanctions in the SHU for longer than their sanction lengths.

## **X. Reintegration Housing Unit**

*The Reintegration Housing Unit (RHU) is a specialized unit created as an alternative to traditional segregated housing, targeted to “male inmates identified as verified or unverified protective custody cases.”<sup>23</sup> Atwater is one of three BOP facilities where the program is available. There were no DC inmates in the RHU program at the time of the inspection.*

The RHU is a BOP program designed to house inmates under protective custody, who would otherwise be housed in the SHU. Applicants go through a screening process to determine eligibility, as space in the program is limited to three RHU housing units across all BOP facilities.<sup>24</sup> As part of the screening process, the BOP assess, “the inmate’s classification as a protective custody case, as well as information detailing the inmate’s placement in the Special Housing Unit (SHU) at previous facilities...[and] a psychological evaluation from the referring institution will be completed to determine whether the inmate is likely to persist in his belief that he cannot safely return to general population at any facility.”<sup>25</sup> RHU staff includes psychology staff, treatment specialists, and typical unit staff. Atwater has a full time psychologist devoted solely to working in the RHU.

The Atwater RHU had been open for two years at the time of the CIC inspection. Staff reported that over those two years, 200 inmates had cycled through the program, with close to 50 being able to transfer to lower security facilities after completing the program. While there is no time limit in terms of how long inmates are able to stay in the program, Atwater staff reported that it can typically be completed in one year. The population of Atwater RHU inmates has included inmates under voluntary protective custody who cannot safely live in an open setting, inmates with sex offenses, inmates who want to leave a gang, and government witnesses. Atwater staff reported that all inmates who are placed in the Atwater SHU are screened for RHU eligibility.

The CIC spoke with a unit case manager who described that most activities offered in RHU take place on the unit, including education and GED programming, as well as access to general and legal library materials. There is a library on the unit itself which included about eight shelves of books. The case manager reported that most educational studies are completed through self-study. RHU participants also have access to the Residential Drug Abuse Program (RDAP), anger management classes, and criminal thinking. Each participant’s curriculum is based on their individual needs, and periodic meetings occur between the warden, case managers, and other staff to provide constructive feedback to participants. RHU participants leave the unit for recreation, religious services, commissary, medical, and additional programs. RHU inmates wear brown uniforms so that staff can distinguish them from other inmates, who wear gray.

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<sup>23</sup> U.S. DEP’T OF JUSTICE, FED. BUREAU OF PRISONS, *Operations Memorandum: Reintegration Housing Unit (RHU) Activation Procedures* 1, [https://www.bop.gov/policy/om/003\\_2016.pdf](https://www.bop.gov/policy/om/003_2016.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> RHU programs are available at the Federal Correction Complex (FCC) Oakdale, Louisiana; USP Atwater, California; and USP Coleman II, Florida. *Id.*

<sup>25</sup> *Id.*

## ***XI. Challenge Program***

*The Challenge program is a BOP program designed to be a therapeutic community to address issues of substance abuse and mental illness. Atwater staff reported that while the capacity of the unit is 128, the capacity of the Challenge program itself is only 60. DC inmates reflected, however, that during facility lockdowns they are not able to participate in programming, and thus have been stuck in certain program levels because they cannot complete the level components.*

The Challenge program is targeted toward inmates with “substance abuse problems and/or mental illnesses,” and provides cognitive-behavioral treatment in a modified therapeutic environment.<sup>26</sup> The BOP explains that inmates participate in interactive groups and attend community meetings to address issues of substance abuse and mental illness, as well as challenge patterns of “criminal thinking.”<sup>27</sup> Focuses of the program include reducing antisocial peer associations, promoting positive relationships, increasing self-control and problem solving skills, violence prevention, and developing prosocial behaviors.<sup>28</sup> In order to participate in the program, an inmate must have at least 18 months left on his sentence, and a “history of substance abuse/dependence or a major mental illness as evidence by a current diagnosis of a psychotic disorder, mood disorder, anxiety disorder, or personality disorder.”<sup>29</sup>

The CIC spoke with staff on the Atwater Challenge unit regarding details of the Atwater program and unit. Staff explained that although the capacity of the unit is 128, the capacity of the Challenge program itself is only 60. Inmates who are housed on the unit, but not currently enrolled in the program can be on the waiting list, graduates or soon-to-be graduates, or graduates who became mentors. For those in the program there are three phases: Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III. Each phase can have 20 participants at one time. In each phase of the program, participants complete journals, or lesson books, with each phase having a different focus. In Phase I, participants complete orientation and begin completing program topics. In Phase II, participants cover topics including anger management, lifestyle, attitudes, and criminal thinking. In Phase III, participants cover topics including drug use, recovery maintenance, and reentry. The Atwater Challenge unit has a staff comprised of the following: unit manager, psychologist, treatment specialist (one for each of the three phases), unit officers, and a case manager.

Staff explained that the operational purpose of the Challenge program is two-fold: either lower an inmate’s security points so that he can transfer to a lower security facility, or prepare individuals for reentry. Furthermore, staff reported that if an inmate finishes the program but still has a high security point score, staff attempts to work with the inmate to get them transferred to a lower security facility by giving the inmate a management variable.<sup>30</sup> In terms of reentry and coordinating

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<sup>26</sup> FED. BUREAU OF PRISONS, *Directory of National Programs* 10 (Nov. 21, 2016), available at [https://www.bop.gov/inmates/custody\\_and\\_care/docs/BOPNationalProgramCatalog.pdf](https://www.bop.gov/inmates/custody_and_care/docs/BOPNationalProgramCatalog.pdf).

<sup>27</sup> *Id.*

<sup>28</sup> *Id.*

<sup>29</sup> *Id.*

<sup>30</sup> “A Management Variable (MGTVs) reflects and supports the professional judgment of Bureau staff to ensure the inmate’s placement in the most appropriate level institution. A Management Variable(s) is required when placement has been made and/or maintained at an institutional level inconsistent with the inmate’s security score – a score which may not completely/accurately reflect his or her security needs.” FED. BUREAU OF PRISONS, U.S. DEPT OF JUSTICE, *Program Statement: Inmate Security Designation and Custody Classification* 3 (Sept. 12, 2006), [https://www.bop.gov/policy/progstat/5100\\_008.pdf](https://www.bop.gov/policy/progstat/5100_008.pdf).

efforts with DC, case management typically begins to initiate release planning 24 months prior to release, by creating post-release plans and recommending residential confinement, when appropriate. Specific to DC and creating release plans, case management typically communicates with CSOSA six months prior to release. Case management meets with participants every six months, or if closer to release, every three months.

The most frequent comment from DC inmates interviewed by the CIC, who were also participating in the Challenge program, was that during facility lockdowns they are not able to participate in programming, and thus have been stuck in certain program levels because they cannot complete the level components. See the figure below for inmate feedback about the Atwater Challenge program.

**Figure 16: Inmates' Reported Issues/Comments Regarding the Challenge Program**

Inmate Responses	Inmates who Reported (N=8)
Stuck in a program phases for months (ex: six months, one year), due to inability to move forward in the phase components because of frequent facility lockdowns.	3
Case manager does not understand DC laws, and is not recommending that people go before the parole board.	2
Case managers are not often on the unit, so participants cannot meet with them.	1
Preferred to stay at Atwater as a mentor in the Atwater Challenge program than move to a facility closer to DC.	1
Transferred to Atwater while in Phase II of the Challenge program, but had to start the program over at Atwater.	1
Challenge program is the most positive aspect of Atwater	1

*\*Responses were collected from 12 inmates were in SHU at the time of the inspection, or had previously been in the Atwater SHU.*

### ***CIC Recommendations***

- Continue to offer programming on the Challenge unit during lockdowns when possible, by limiting lockdowns to specific areas or units in the facility.
- Ensure that case managers are available on the Challenge unit to meet with inmates and plan for release and reentry.

## ***XII. Warden's Incentive Based Program Model***

*During the opening session executive staff explained that the warden implemented an incentive-based program model designed to "engage inmates to invest in themselves." The program rewards inmates for completing education programs.*

In the incentive-based system, Atwater inmates are paid for completing educational programs. For example, when inmates pass the GED they typically receive \$25, and the Atwater warden gives an additional \$75. Atwater executive staff explained that the program really gives money back to inmates from what they have spent on commissary items, phone calls, emails, etc.

### ***XIII. Halfway House Time***

*Over the past year, there have been general reports that BOP residential reentry center/ halfway house time has decreased, in terms of availability and amount of time spent, due to a reduction in the number of active facilities.*

During the opening session, Atwater executive staff reported that prior to 2018, halfway house placement recommendations made by Atwater staff were followed close to a rate of 95%, and if the recommendation was not followed, it was due to an individualized determination. In 2018 however, Atwater staff reported that their placement recommendations had been followed closer to a rate of 50%. Staff reflected that this decrease in approval has had an effect on inmates in that inmates' perception has become that they will not receive any halfway house time, presumably reducing the behavioral incentive that the possibility of halfway house time provides.

### ***XIV. PREA Related Evidence Collection***

*Following an alleged incident of sexual misconduct, any evidence collection is completed at a clinic that is an hour drive from USP Atwater.*

Atwater does not complete evidence collection (aside from documenting overt/obvious signs of an incident) following an alleged incident involving sexual misconduct. Formal evidence collection and evaluation is completed by a facility in Fresno, California, which is approximately an hour drive from Atwater. The clinic in Fresno is not regularly staffed. Instead, Atwater staff must call the clinic's contact person, tell the contact person that Atwater staff needs to take someone who has reported an instance of sexual misconduct to the clinic, and then a clinic staff person can meet the Atwater staff/inmate(s) at the facility. The medical staff person with whom the CIC spoke had never been to the clinic. Atwater staff also explained that hospital emergency rooms in the area do not complete evidence collection.

# APPENDIX A: Methodology

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### ***CIC Atwater Inspection: Methodology***

In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Corrections Information Council (CIC) and the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), on January 19, 2017, the CIC requested to inspect USP Atwater (Atwater). The inspection request itinerary included a tour of all areas of the facility to which inmates have access, discussions with staff, confidential interviews with DC inmates, and document review/collection. Prior to the onsite inspection, the CIC communicated with DC inmates at Atwater to notify them of the upcoming inspection and offer the opportunity to participate in a confidential interview with a member of the CIC.

Prior the onsite portion of the inspection, per the inspection request, the BOP sent the CIC the following documents, which are on file with the CIC:

- Roster of DC Inmates
- Current A&O Handbook
- Significant Incidents (01/2017 – 12/2017)
- Prohibited Act Rates (01/2017 – 12/2017)
- 2017 Administrative Remedies Tracking Data for BP-9, BP-10, and BP-11
- Inmate Sentencing and Designation Fact Sheet (as of December 2018)
- DC Specific Inmate Sentencing and Designation Fact Sheet (as of December 2017)
- Inmate Demographics Fact Sheet (as of December 2017)
- DC Specific Inmate Demographics Fact Sheet (as of December 2017)
- Health Services and Psychology staff positions
- Staff Vacancies
- 2017 Monthly Average Daily Populations
- Most current American Correctional Association Accreditation Report
- 2017 Inmate Enrollment in Programs
- National Menus (12/31/2017 – 03/03/2018)
- Summary of Urinalysis Results (01/01/2017 – 12/04/2017)
- Completed CIC Pre-inspection Information Worksheet (documenting DC inmates' involvement in facility programs)

The CIC conducted an onsite inspection of Atwater, on April 11 and 12, 2018. The CIC representatives on the inspection were Executive Director Michelle Bonner, Program Analysts Laura de las Casas, Kendra Van de Water, and Rebekah Joab. The inspection process included an opening session with Atwater executive staff (acting warden, incoming warden, two associate wardens, one captain, case management coordinator, health services administrator, and reentry affairs coordinator); a tour of the facility grounds; interviews with DC Inmates in general population and the Secure Housing Unit (SHU); an onsite document review; and closing remarks with the warden. The case management coordinator, health services administrator, and reentry affairs coordinator escorted CIC staff during the tour portion of the inspection. The areas toured included: Challenge unit, SHU, unit 1A (step-down from SHU), reintegration housing unit (RHU), medical unit, mental health staff offices, education area, indoor recreation area, reentry area, and the UNICOR work space.

Following the inspection, the survey responses and interview notes were compiled and the complete responses can be found in Appendix B. Open ended survey responses include answers collected on



the surveys themselves and during interviews with CIC staff. Open-ended responses include information that was gathered from inmate surveys as well as interviews. Open-ended responses were edited to erase identifying information, and were also edited for clarity.

The CIC provided the BOP with a draft version of the report for review of factual information and an opportunity to respond to follow-up questions and any other information in the report. The BOP responses to the CIC draft report can be found attached to the end of this report.

## **APPENDIX B: Inmate Survey Responses**

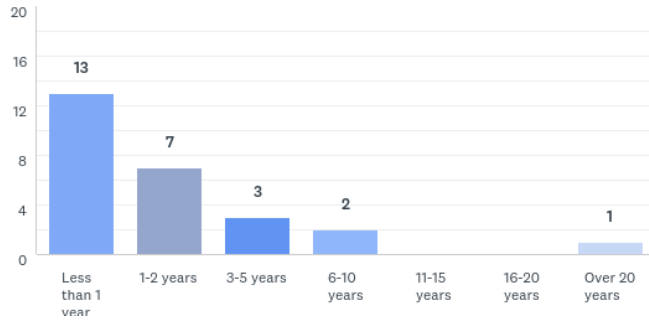
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## Atwater Inmate Survey Responses

27 Total Respondents\*

### How long have you been incarcerated at USP Atwater?

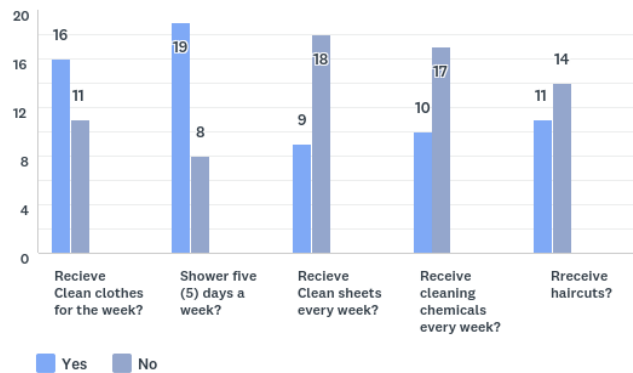
Answered: 26 Skipped: 1



### Hygiene

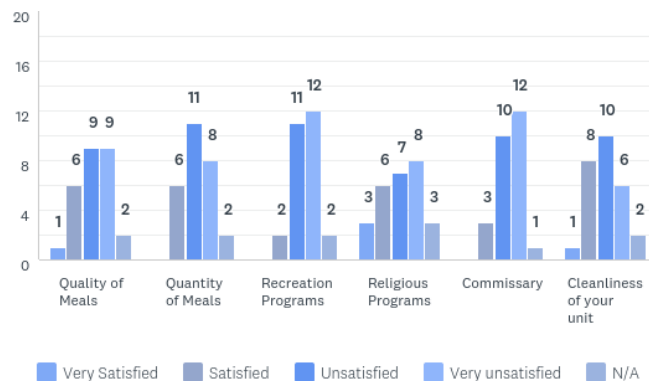
Answered: 27 Skipped: 0

Are you normally able to:



### How satisfied are you with:

Answered: 27 Skipped: 0



\* Open-ended responses include information that was gathered from inmate surveys as well as interviews. Open-ended responses were edited to erase identifying information, and were also edited for clarity.

**Please provide examples of why you are satisfied or unsatisfied with the previously discussed items:**

Inmate Responses
The laundry department does not provide soap, combs, razors, etc. Other BOP Institutions provide these on a monthly basis. During lockdowns we are only provided showers twice weekly. Other BOP institutions provide more showers during lockdowns: one shower after first 72 hours, then one shower every 48 hours.
They don't exchange sheets (for new ones), instead they keep washing same sheets. They also don't give us cleaning chemicals every week.
They don't hand out soap, razors, etc.
The prison stays on lockdown too damn much!
The food is terrible, units aren't too bad, but we barely get any commissary.
Whenever we are on lockdown we, the inmates, do not receive the things that we are supposed to receive per the BOP policy and the constitution.
My unit- 4B – doesn't have any working water fountains. It's short on washers and dryers, and it's always flooded. Laundry is always closed. The food is trash and is not enough to feed a child.
With the perpetual lockdowns at this facility, we are often denied the basic essentials of food, hygiene, and exercise. During lockdowns we only shower twice a week.
I'm unsatisfied with these things because they are never on time or they don't allow us the opportunity to access them.
I'm unsatisfied because they don't provide anything they are supposed to. They don't give out hygiene products – when I first arrived I got a small toothpaste and one bar of soap.
I am unsatisfied because of the unsanitary issues.
I'm unsatisfied with the food and the commissary because it is not enough.
It's prison.
Hygiene materials are not being given to us in accordance with BOP policy, they are not supplying us with all the necessary items or supplies we are supposed to be getting. Disinfectants, laundry, soap, etc., are not passed out like they are supposed to be. Cells are cleaned with shampoo.
I wash my own stuff; I buy my own food.
Recreation is never on time.
I'm unsatisfied with not being able to receive recreation five hours weekly. I'm very dissatisfied that my account funds get encumbrance for No Reason, as well as I'm not allowed to use the telephone to call my family and I don't have any sanctions to have my phone taken away from me; whereas, I'm allowed 15 minutes a month in SHU living quarters.
The food is always too spicy, overcooked rice, under cooked meats, and we are fed like five and six year old children.
I'm unsatisfied because the focus of the staff isn't the care of the inmate, but solely to find more ways to restrict, confine, and neglect us.
I'm unsatisfied because the food portions are small and cold.
There is no soap, deodorant, or toothpaste on commissary. We are given a 10-shampoo pack a week to shower and clean our cells with, we have no deodorant and the toothpaste is no good.

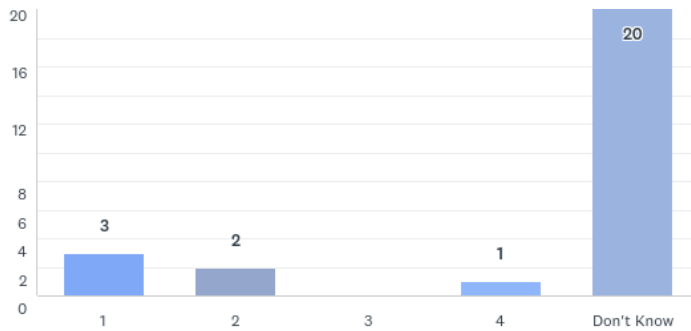
**Is there anything else you would like to share about daily life at USP Atwater?**

Inmate Responses
This warden has created a subtle undercurrent of unnecessary tension due to the fact he thinks that it is his duty to punish us and make our time hard. And that mentality has trickled down to some staff. All other wardens that I have encountered understand the system. The judge meted out our punishment. BOP staff are to ensure that the institution run in a safe, secure, and orderly fashion.
I'm burnt out for real.
It's terrible.
There is non-stop violation of our constitutional rights. No prisoners are getting 1,500 calories a meal.
The staff constantly locks us down with no explanation. They block all your phone numbers, preventing you from keeping strong family ties or handling legal things. There are never any staff who do casework here in 4B.
I only expect what policy mandates for me to receive. At this prison, I have little access to my unit team nor do I have recourse to redress my grievances.
They lock us down and make us pay for sick call, all of our rights are being violated.
This is not a good place to be because I am too far away from my family.
We stay locked down.
It is unclean and also locked down a lot. We aren't given proper hygiene in order to keep ourselves clean. They just do what they want as far as order or operation of the facility, especially toward inmates.
I need more programs so I can transfer closer to home.
There are too many lockdowns.
The education department has no teachers or tutors. Institutional pay is only enough to really buy cosmetics and there are no black stations on the TV.
Daily life at USP Atwater can become quite an uncomfortable environment due to unprofessionalism of many staff personnel.

The staff are biased and lean toward supporting groups more too their ethnic background!

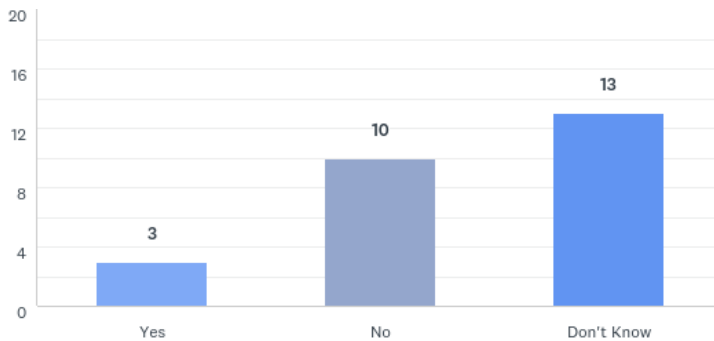
### What is your Medical Care Level?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 1



### Are you on the chronic caseload?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 1



If you are on the chronic care caseload, please give the reason(s) why:

#### Inmate Responses

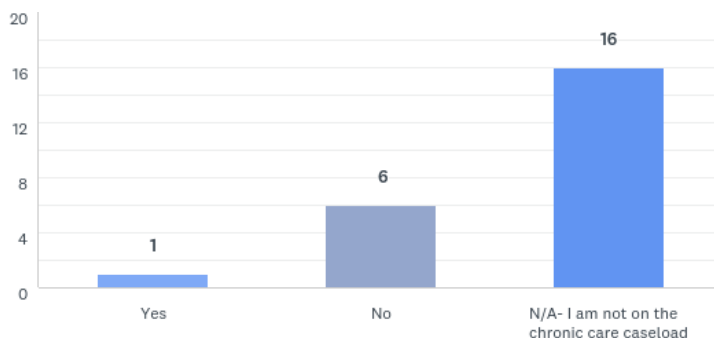
High blood pressure, borderline diabetes, and kidney stones. I haven't been seen for chronic care since I got here in August 2017.

High blood pressure.

I have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and my spine is not straight. We have to go through too much at the medical department and have to pay \$2.00 and nothing is ever done.

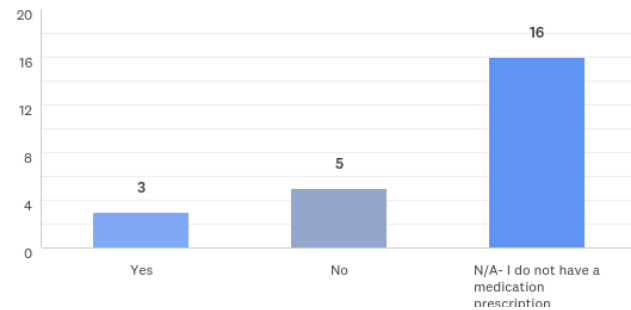
### If you are on the chronic care caseload, are you generally receiving timely follow-ups?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 4



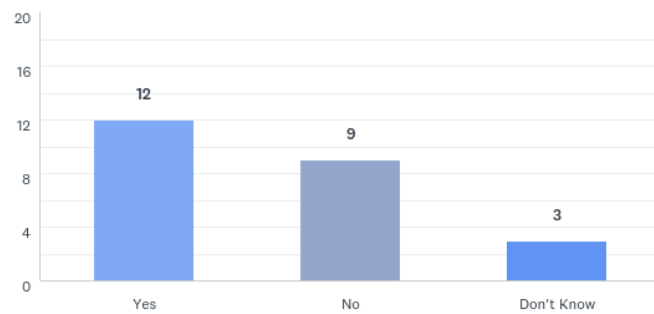
**If you have a medication prescription, do you feel you receive medications in a timely manner?**

Answered: 24 Skipped: 3



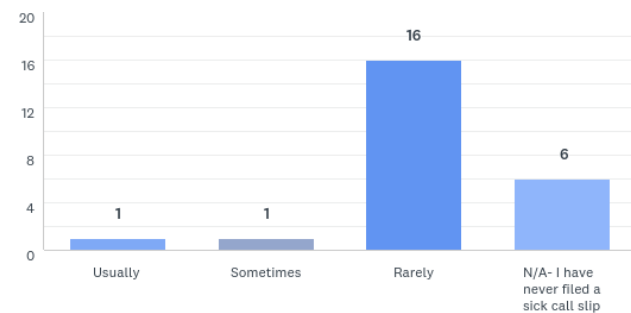
**Do you normally have access to sick call slips?**

Answered: 24 Skipped: 3



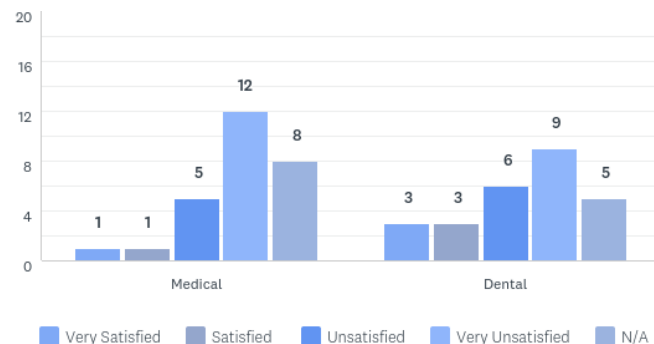
**Does Health Services respond to sick call slips within 48 hours?**

Answered: 24 Skipped: 3



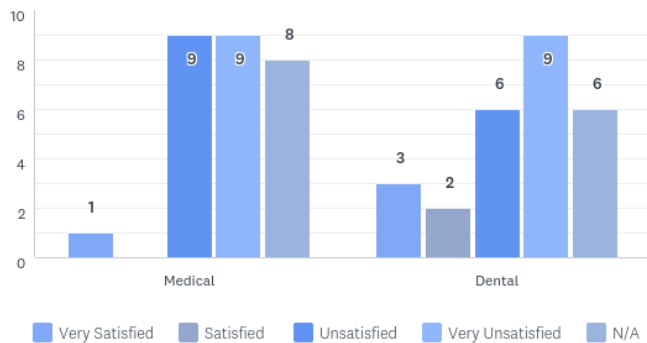
**Overall, how satisfied are you with the QUALITY of care provided by the following:**

Answered: 27 Skipped: 0



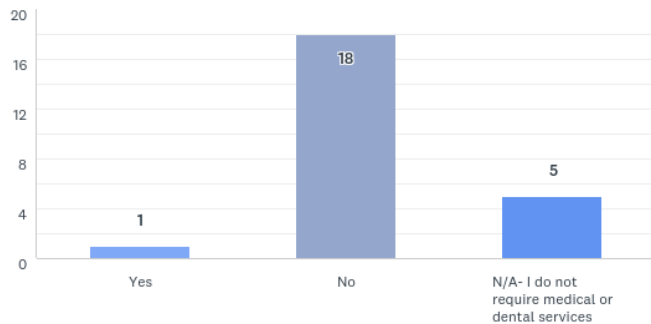
**Overall, how satisfied are you with the WAIT TIMES to see the following:**

Answered: 27 Skipped: 0



**Do you feel you have adequate access to medical and dental services?**

Answered: 24 Skipped: 3



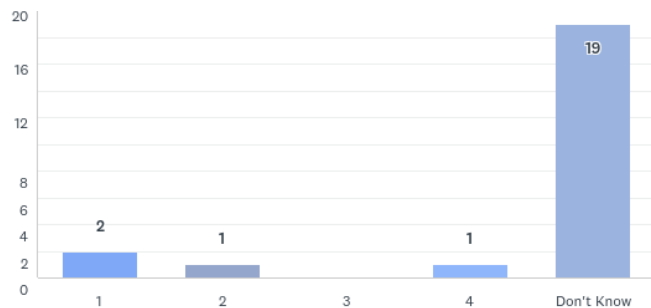
**Is there anything else you would like to share about medical or dental care at USP Atwater?**

Inmate Responses
Dental is really good, but medical is no good.
Dental care is unbelievable, but medical does little to get by.
I have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and my spine is not straight. We have to go through o much at the medical department and have to pay \$2.00 and nothing is ever done.
I get my teeth cleaned annually and the dental technician is great.
I haven't been here long enough, but I haven't had my teeth cleaned in 10 years.
Takes too long, six months to 18 months, for a dental cleaning.
This is the worst medical that I have ever seen since I've been locked up these 21 years straight. One inmate needed a wheelchair, but there were no chairs and no handicapped cells and he fell. When you come off the bus, your medications are taken and you have to buy from commissary.
It seems as if when I place a sick call slip in, I'm either better before they respond or they don't respond at all.
They are very non responsive and refuse to give medical treatment when needed and they also are charging us to receive medical treatment, which is improper and unfair.
The medical department is concerned with making me pay \$2.00 but I don't get needed treatment.
They always charge me a \$2.00 copay for all sick calls – even if is just an accident playing soccer.
USP Atwater has internal issues with staff being untrained, unprofessional, and emotionally attached in a negative way that cause them to be negligent toward performing the responsibility to their oath of duty.
Someone just died (in SHU), because of their negligent performance.
They don't care.
They think you are telling a lie about whatever you need to see them about.



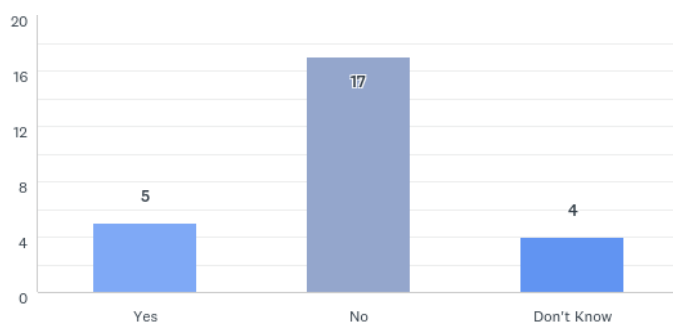
### What is your designated Mental Health Care Level?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 4



### Have you ever been diagnosed with a mental health issue, at this facility or elsewhere?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 1

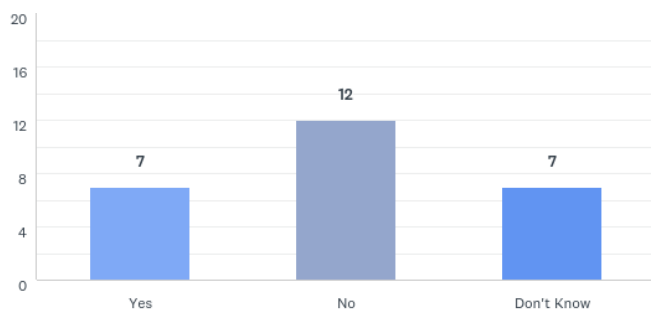


### If you have been diagnosed with a mental health issues, please give the reason(s) why:

Inmate Responses
I have a diagnosis of ADHD, bipolar disorder, and mental stress disorder.
I was diagnosed with PTSD at the DC jail and Hazelton.
I was diagnosed with PTSD and depression on the street.
I've been diagnosed with type two bipolar disorder and paranoid schizophrenia. I was diagnosed at a clinic in DC.
I don't need to be diagnosed, being that it should be self-explanatory that I would have a mental disorder from being incarcerated 20 years, dealing with these racist ass staff and idiot inmates alike!

### Did you have a mental health evaluation when arriving at USP Atwater?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 1

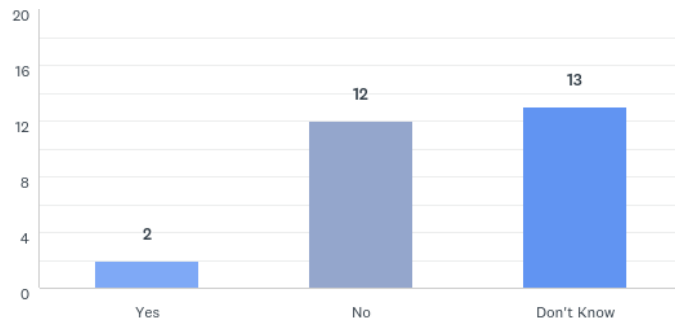


If you did have a mental health evaluation, please describe:

Inmate Responses
I was only given a mental health form to fill out.
My mental health is bad because I have a problem with being in California.
It was routine.
It was very basic! They asked “are you going to kill yourself?” and “do you feel like killing yourself?” with my answers being “No!” And that sums up your mental health evaluation here at USP Atwater upon arrival.
I really wouldn’t call it a mental evaluation because the psychology staff person just came to R&D, did a mental questionnaire, checked a few boxes, and moved on to the next inmate being received to the institution.

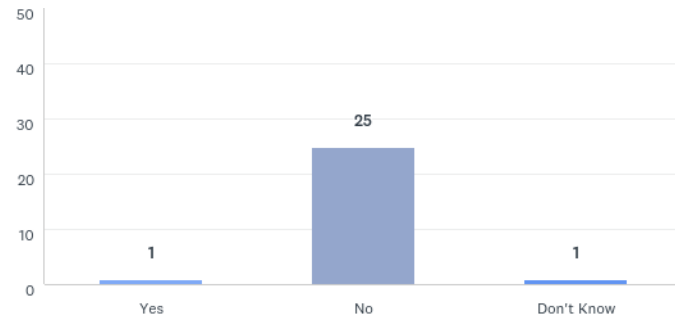
Did your mental health diagnosis change when you arrived at USP Atwater?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 0



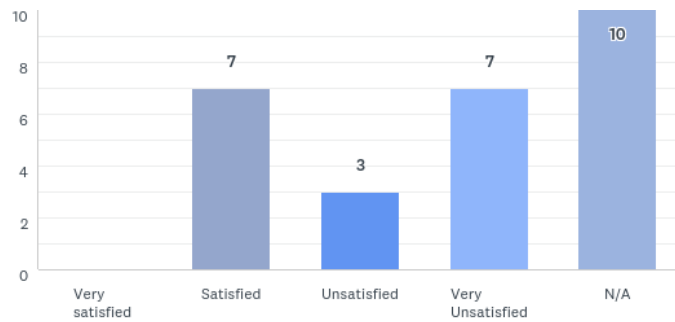
Are you currently receiving psychotropic medication?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 0



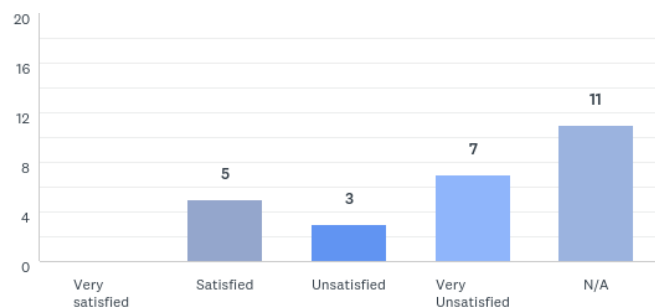
Overall, how satisfied are you with the QUALITY of mental health care?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 0



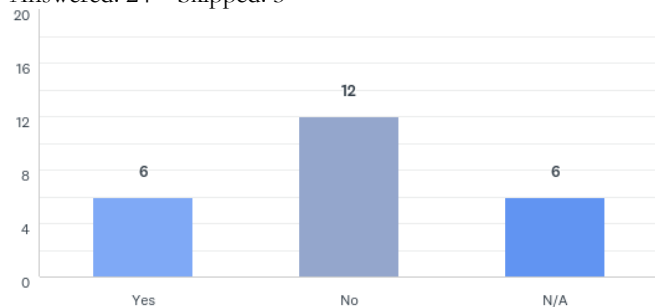
Overall, how satisfied with the WAIT TIMES to see mental health services?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 1



### Do you feel you have adequate access to mental health services?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 3

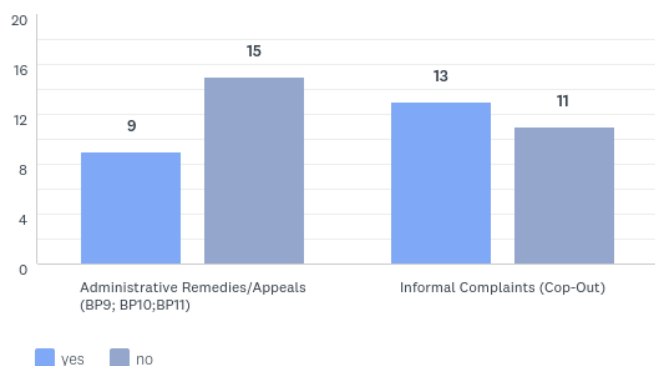


### Is there anything else you would like to share about mental health care at USP Atwater?

Inmate Responses
People are losing their minds in these penitentiaries.
With all of the mental and emotional cruel and unusual abuse and punishment that we, the inmates, have to endure, we all might need to receive some form of mental health treatment!
Psychology services do not offer regular criminal thinking and cognitive therapy programs.
They treat me good.
Psychology staff seems that they are not permitted to speak to us (the inmates) as much as they want.
The majority of times when mental health does do rounds in SHU, it's basically done to look good for the N.I.C.E. camera system. It never seems to be according to one's requests or complaints.
The suicides are high and staff does not notify psychologists of our requests.
In SHU I have requested to speak with Mental Health Services, with no success.

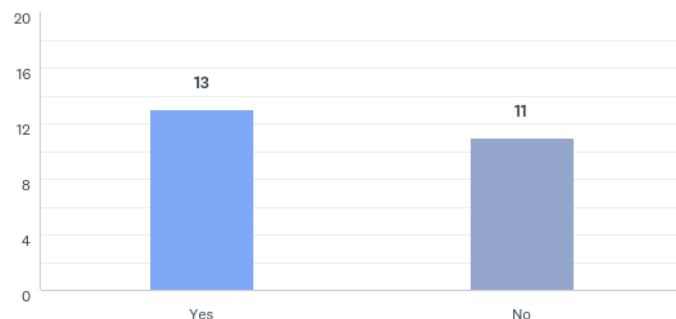
### Do you normally have access to the following:

Answered: 24 Skipped: 3



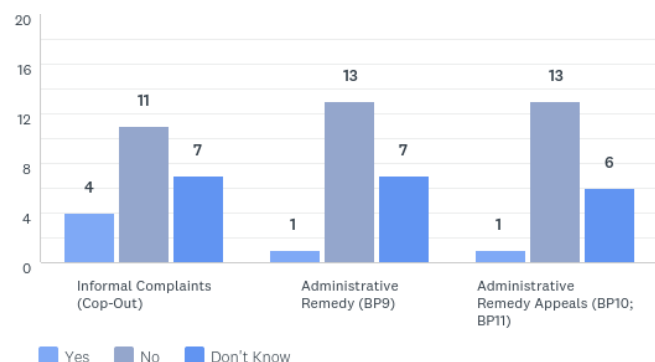
### Have you ever used the administrative remedy process at USP Atwater?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 3



**Do you feel that the following are generally dealt with fairly at USP Atwater?**

Answered: 22 Skipped: 5

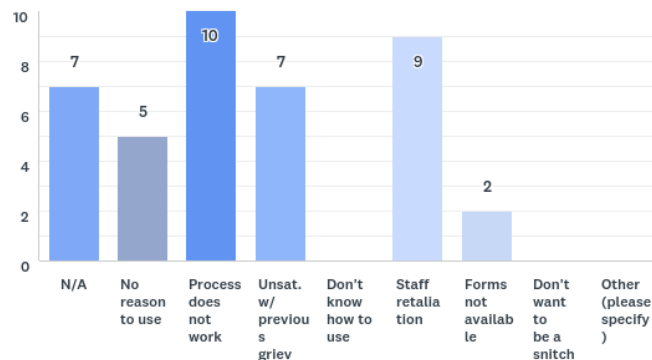


**Why do you feel the above items are fair or unfair?**

Inmate Responses
The process is unfair because they try to tell us there are no forms and they retaliate against us when we ask for them. They purposely don't let us have them; only certain staff help.
It's unfair because they are not going to challenge each other as staff.
It's unfair because medical care is a big joke here and the staff knows this and as I've already stated to congresswomen Ms. Eleanor Holmes Norton this administrative remedy process is and always has been biased!!
I feel they are unfair because I used the remedy process following a write-up I received. In the grievance I provided policy supporting why I shouldn't have been written up and my guilty result was still affirmed.
It's unfair because nothing is getting done.
They never resolve your complaints in a timely fashion or abide by policy, rules, and regulations.
They are unfair because there is no answer.
I feel unfairness do to my informal complaints being unanswered!
I feel that they are unfair because all issues are almost always denied and rejected.
They are unfair on every stage, due to the fact that we're dealing with a in-house system comprised of colleagues, who are long time acquaintances, cousins, uncles, and brothers by fraternity, army, or relation. Therefore the process in corrupted by this chain of command of camaraderie and companionship!
It's unfair because they just let someone die two weeks ago.

**If you have chosen not to use the administrative remedy process, why not? (check all that apply)**

Answered: 23 Skipped: 4

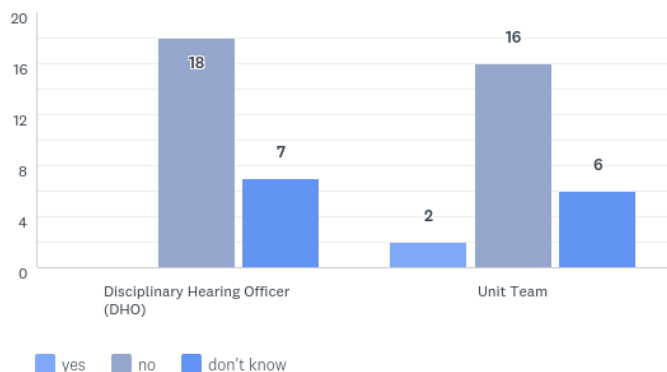


Is there anything else you would like to share about the administrative remedy process at USP Atwater?

Inmate Responses
They retaliate and tell us to drop certain BP's.
More than half of this inmate population has been filing administrative remedy complaints about the nonstop abuse of authority by this warden and the denial of our rights – constitutional, civil, and human rights.
They tend to deny or delay our due process rights.
It seems that the person who files is never right, even when he shows proof of staff negligence with proof and evidence!
Once a person from Washington, DC files a grievance, we are retaliated against and ignored in the institution.

Overall, do you feel that the disciplinary decisions are fair from the following:

Answered: 26 Skipped: 1



Is there anything else you would like to share about disciplinary decisions at USP Atwater?

Inmate Responses
Everyone confined at this facility “knows” that disciplinary procedures here are a joke. You’re guilty before you walk in there. Also, the warden has a system in place here where thy encumber (deny you access to) everything; no commissary, no phone, no email, this is before you see DHO and most times you don’t even have an incident report. So basically, there are systematically tramping over due process. They freeze your account as part of the disciplinary process, and it feels like retaliation.
You can never win, you will always be guilty because you are an inmate.
Everyone gets punished from the actions of one.
I have paid disciplinary fines three times - \$40, \$50, and \$40.
They have always been very, very biased, and most of the time the staff does not care about the policy.
They are extreme no matter what, sanctions always involve monetary fines, and for one shot they give you every sanction. For one 300 series infraction, the sanction included a \$30 fine, loss of phone privileges, loss of commissary, loss of email privileges, and loss of visitation.
They are fair.

The disciplinary hearing officer is very biased towards inmates and never bases findings off of being fair and partial, because of the relationship that's shared with staff personnel. I was sent to SHU after a DHO hearing, but I was not allowed to submit a written statement and was not allowed to have witnesses. Also, USP Atwater has serious problems with extorting inmates out of the funds at DHO hearings. It's often that sanctions consist of loss of inmate funds from his inmate account.

I was just recently written up and found guilty about two situations that are not true. I have been stereotyped, discriminated against, etc. because I'm from Washington, DC.

They're extorting us by charging our account for everything, on top of other punitive infractions. Then when we fail to pay the "fines" from lack of "income" because there are no jobs available or our jobs are not paying "proper wages," they are "freezing" our accounts, making it so we are unable to call our family and it moves us to other housing units, also interrupting the ability to program.

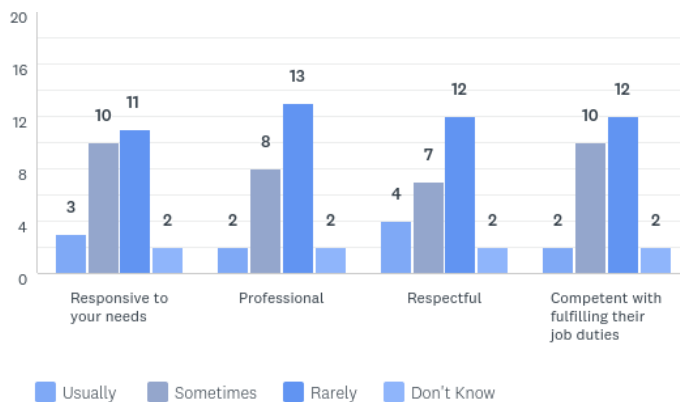
They are extorting inmates out of the money under the guise of saying it is a fine, and if you refuse to sign over your money after a DHO hearing, your account is frozen.

I didn't pay a fine and had a \$25 spending limit, no use of phones, no access to law library, and I could not get labels for legal mail.

I was charged \$200 from the warden at Atwater, for a disciplinary infraction that occurred at my previous facility. I paid the money so I could get out of the SHU.

### Are your housing unit officers generally:

Answered: 26 Skipped: 1



### Do you feel that the following are helpful?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 2



### Is there anything else you would like to share about staff at USP Atwater?

#### Inmate Responses

Staff don't have inmate's best interest. They treat us poorly.

You have units where the unit teams do their jobs. Unfortunately, the unit I'm assigned to – 3B – is known for having a substandard unit team.

Not all staff are the same – that's at every facility.

As usual, the BOP staff here are unaware of BOP policy and standards of conduct.

Sometimes they do what they want, when they want.

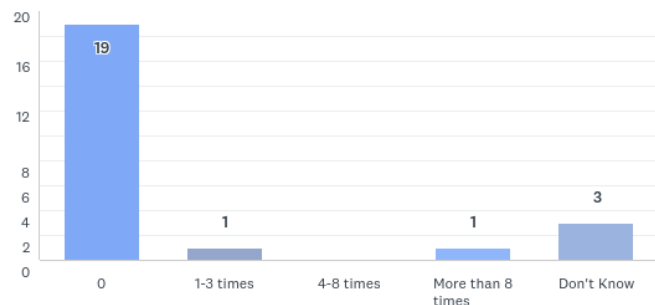
They are undertrained and when there isn't a superior around, they disrespect inmates by calling them names, such as bitch, and often times tell us to suck their dick because we're in lockup and can't get to them. More important, they take inmate's to undisclosed areas where there are no cameras and assault inmates off camera when they have you in handcuffs, and they deem you a problem.

The staff here at Atwater USP believe they are supposed to control everything we do.

The majority of staff will automatically presume inmates are in the wrong due to them being already convicted of a crime from society. You are always guilty, and they are very unprofessional with how they communicate with prisoners.

#### How many times have you been placed in ambulatory restraints at USP Atwater?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 3



#### How many times have you been placed in four-point restraints at USP Atwater?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 3



#### If you have been placed in restraints at USP Atwater, what is the maximum time you have spent in restraints at one time? (Ambulatory or four-point)

##### Inmate Responses

Ten minutes – ambulatory.

#### If you have been placed in restraints at USP Atwater, do you have any injuries from use and application of restraints? If so, please describe:

No responses.

#### If you have been placed in restraints at USP Atwater, did staff provide the opportunity to use the toilet? Please describe:

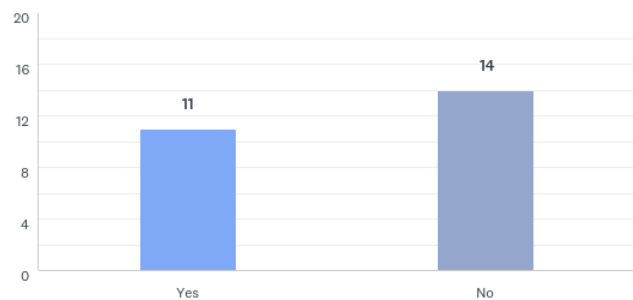
##### Inmate Responses

Yes (for ambulatory).

#### Have you ever been harassed, threatened, or abused by staff at USP Atwater?

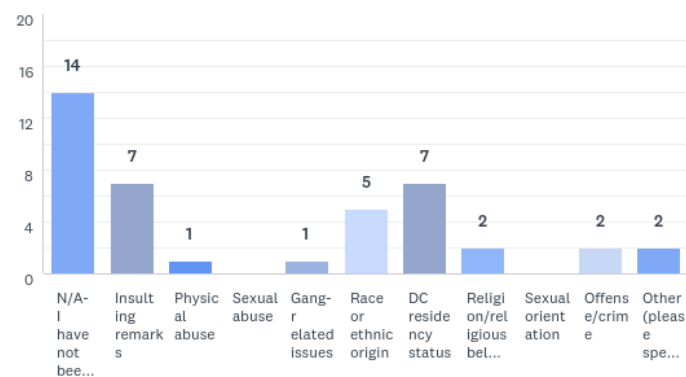


Answered: 25 Skipped: 2



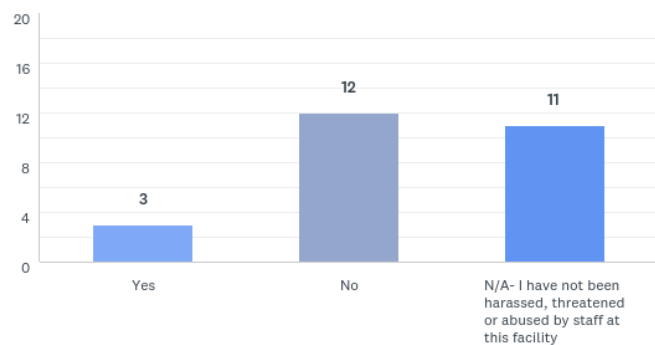
**If yes, what did it involve? (check all that apply)**

Answered: 26 Skipped: 1



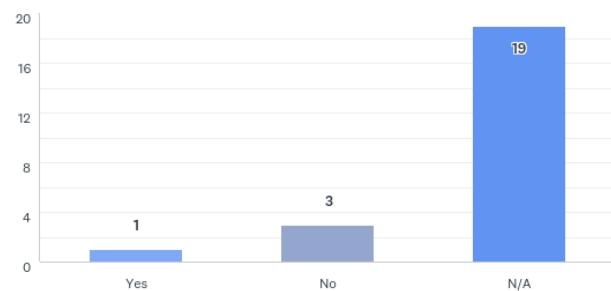
**If you have been harassed, threatened, or abused by staff at USP Atwater, did you report it?**

Answered: 26 Skipped: 1



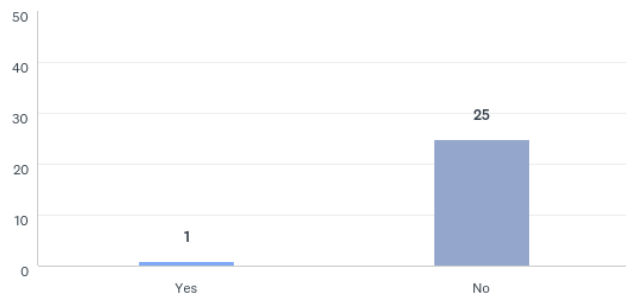
**If yes, are you satisfied with how it was handled?**

Answered: 23 Skipped: 4



**Have you ever been harassed, threatened or abused by other inmates at USP Atwater?**

Answered: 26 Skipped: 1



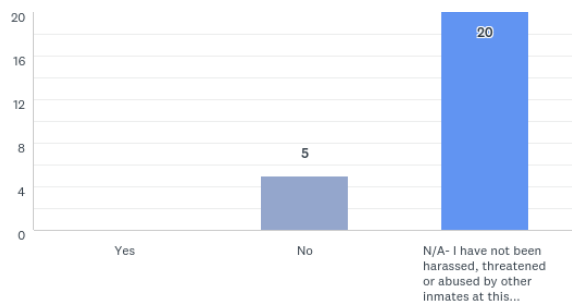
**If yes, what did it involve? (check all that apply)**

Answered: 26 Skipped: 1



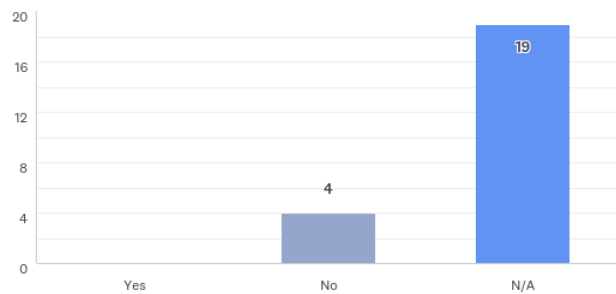
**If you have been harassed, threatened or abused by other inmates at USP Atwater, did you report it?**

Answered: 25 Skipped: 2



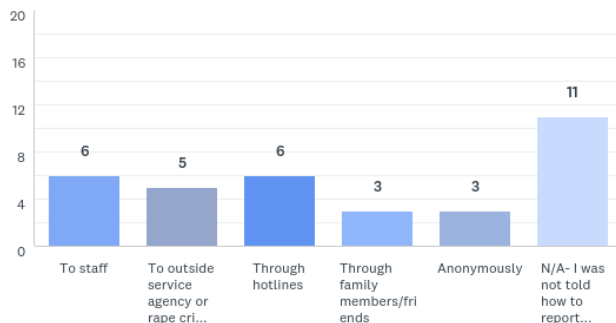
**If yes, are you satisfied with how it was handled?**

Answered: 23 Skipped: 4



**Were you told that you could report sexual abuse in the following ways:**

Answered: 20 Skipped: 7

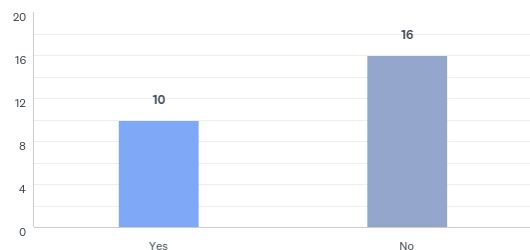


Is there anything else you would like to share about institutional safety at USP Atwater?

Inmate Responses
It feels safe.
Overall, this is a safe facility and I love this facility as far as safety.
I feel safe here.
The institution remains in a perpetual state of full lockdown.
These staff have a tendency to want to shake inmates down every step we walk and also like to strip search inmates daily. There isn't that much patting down in the world, especially if inmates already know that patting down is a consistent function and if the inmate hasn't been suspected of having illegal stuff on his person.
There is really no institutional safety here. The officers find ways of getting information out of your institutional records and telling and giving it to other inmates.
Men staff members have no respect for straight men prisoners. The men staff members use their home tendencies to humiliate and dishonor men out of spite, disrespect, etc.

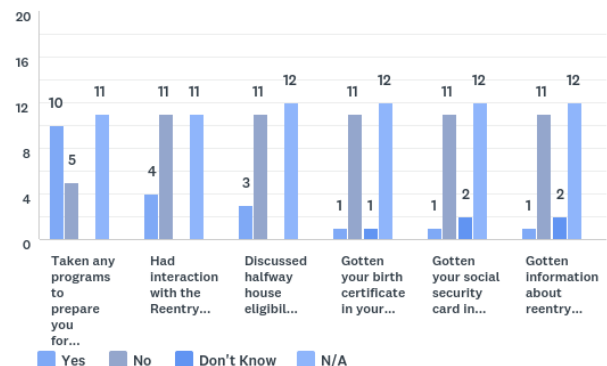
Are you within 18 months of release?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 1



If you are within 18 months of release, have you:

Answered: 26 Skipped: 1

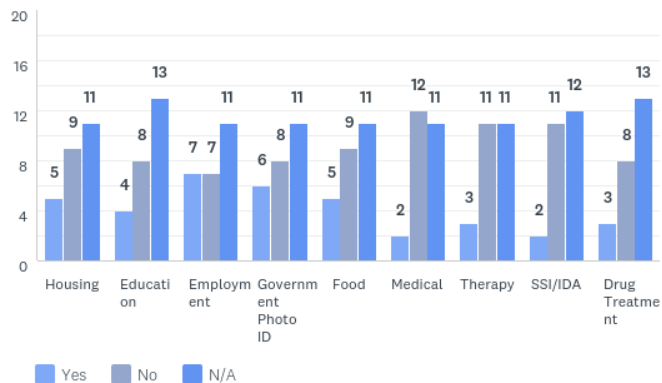


X-Axis Selection Key:

Taken any programs to prepare you for release?  
 Had interaction with the Reentry Affairs Coordinator?  
 Discussed halfway house eligibility with your unit team?  
 Gotten your birth certificate in your institutional jacket?  
 Gotten your social security card in your institutional jacket?  
 Gotten information about reentry resources in your community?

**If you are within 18 months of release, do you know how to obtain the following after release?**

Answered: 25 Skipped: 2

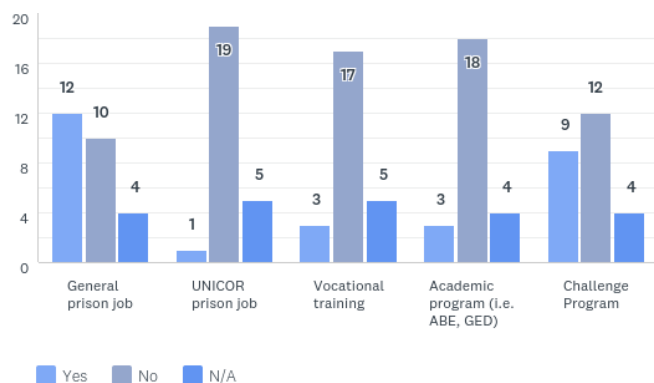


**Is there anything else you would like to share about reentry?**

Inmate Responses
I'm too far away from DC, and it's hard for me to communicate with the time zone difference and facility lockdowns.
Who can I talk to for help?
I'm trying to find out how I could see and get the parole board to lift my detainer for supervised release violation.
I am ready to go home.
Yes, can you help with housing and financially?
I have a year left with no assistance plus I'm over 500 miles away from DC.
I am 24 months until being released an I'm continuously being harassed by staff, locked down and shipped to institutions across the country for nothing, or a minor infraction 300 incident report. If this continues, I will be ill prepared for my release.
The institution is not helping us in any of the above areas.
Reentry is a helpful program.

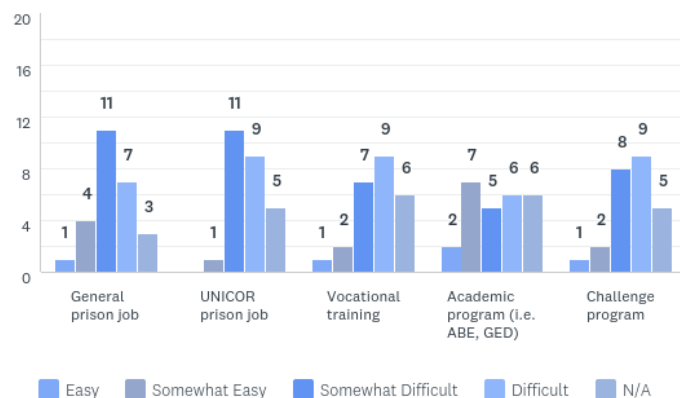
**Are you currently participating in:**

Answered: 26 Skipped: 1



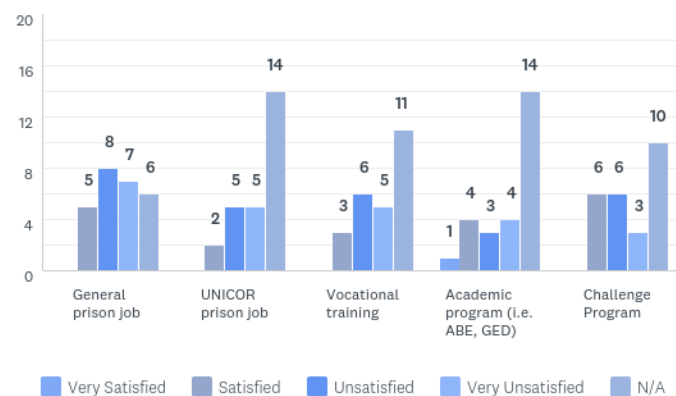
**How easy or difficult is it to get into the following activities in this facility?**

Answered: 26 Skipped: 1



### How satisfied are you with the following activities in this facility?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 1

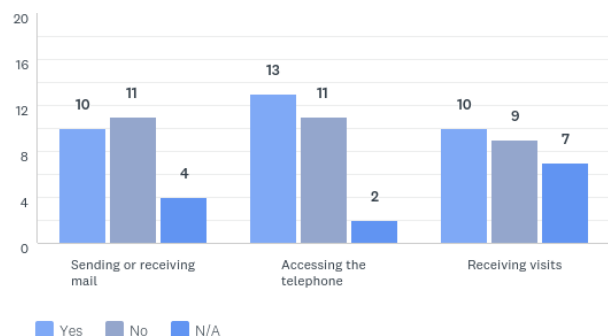


### Is there anything else you would like to share about education and programming at USP Atwater?

Inmate Responses
Everything here sucks – there are not enough classes, programming, or teachers.
What programming? Too many lockdowns.
There is nothing to do here. We need more programming and classes.
Education department is alright, with the exception of the fact that there is only a few classes and not enough law library computers.
There is nothing to do at Atwater, it is just warehousing people. A job at Atwater isn't really a job, because you don't learn anything. In terms of programming, I have all the certificates that are offered at Atwater, so there is nothing for me to do, and no additional work for me to show the parole board.
It's the job, they do not pay the inmates really anything, they are slaving us for little or no pay.
I would like to participate in a trade school, however they are not offered at USPs. I already completed the programs that are offered here, so I don't have anything to do.
Lockdowns prevent programming.
It's very unorganized and biased for the most part and hard to get into classes or courses.
They are very poor.
Yes, that it's really hard to get a job if you are not from the area that the facility is in.
These programs are overseen by incompetent, unintuitive individuals. The classes are out dated and serve no qualitative purpose in aid to an inmate. The only class effective to an inmate who doesn't have one, is the GED!
There are no teachers in the education department here at USP Atwater. And there are really no programs here. GED and ACE are offered, but I completed those so there is nothing for me to do. This institution, there's nothing here except us. I am completing correspondence classes with a local community college.

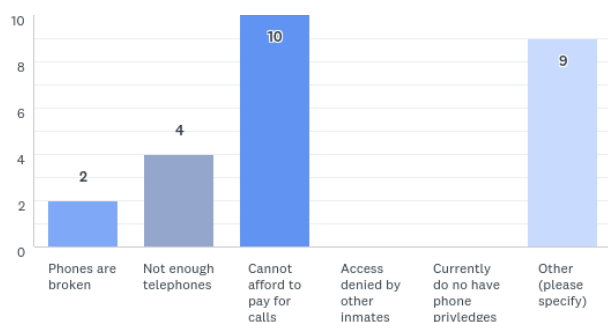
### Have you had any problems within the past six months:

Answered: 26 Skipped: 1



#### If you have problems accessing the telephone, why?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 9

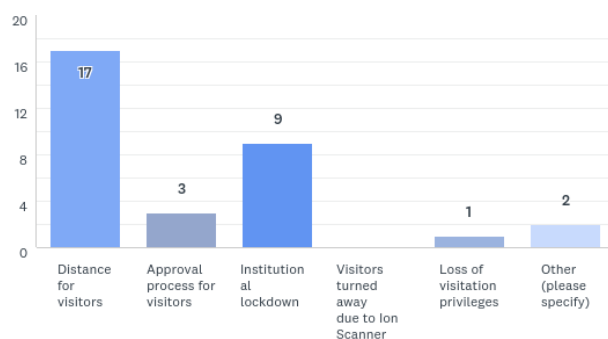


#### If you currently do not have phone privileges, how long have you been without phone privileges?

Inmate Responses	
We are on lockdown too much.	
They blocked all of our local numbers.	
Lockdowns.	
Two years.	
The phone calls cost too much for long distance calls from California to DC. It's too much pressure on myself and family@ Also, my family doesn't have the finances or hearth to fly this distance.	
The institution tries to dictate who we can call and who we can't call. Or they just shut your phone and email off.	

#### If you have problems receiving visits, why?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 7



#### If you currently do not have visitation privileges, how long have you been without visitation privileges?

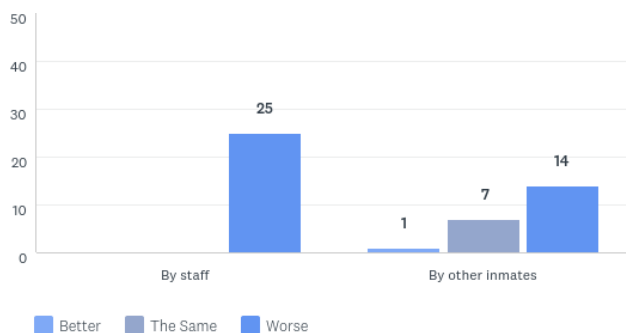
*No responses.*

### Is there anything else you would like to share about communication and visitation at USP Atwater?

Inmate Responses
This is the only institution in the BOP that I know of that will encumber (block all access) to phone, email, and commissary, when you do not even get an incident report.
Visitation is 100% discouraged at every institution and they don't want people to visit.
Since being in Atwater, for about 100 days, I have not had access to phones, email, commissary, or haircuts. I don't know why I don't have access. My phone and email contact lists were also wiped.
Incoming mail from my family was rejected by the facility because it had a mailing label on it. It was just sent back, I didn't receive even a copy of the letter.
Lockdowns hinder communication, but you can still write.
We need more affordable calls and to not have to wait one hour between calls. I had the same contact as someone who is also in BOP custody, and the contact was deleted from my list. So to talk to my family members, I have to ask them to change their phone numbers. Also, with the new mail policies, you can no longer get even a birthday card – you just get a photocopy of what your family sent.
They arbitrarily shut off our email and phone privileges without any incident report sanctions.
They are removing all your contacts from email.
I lost contact with my family and friends when my contact list was erased, and I didn't have a copy.
My legal mail was opened outside of my cell.
I really don't have family support, and I am on email restriction.
I have not seen my mother since 2000. Recently I sent out two letters and they both came back the next month saying "return to sender."
My family member and I have the same person on our contact lists, but now we cannot both have the contact.
By being unprofessional and spiteful staff personnel make it hard to communicate with my family, because they cut off my inmate account and turned my telephone off for no reason.
Yeah, they are making inmates miss their lunch, because they took the vending machine out of visitation and are not allowing food service to save lunch for them after inmates finish with their visits. This also deprives the inmate's family of refreshments for eight hours while visiting inmates.
I'm too far away to receive a visit.
Yes, I have my phone privileges, these people have yet to approve numbers that I submitted numerous times on my list. I haven't used a phone in a year, and I have money to call.

### Compared to other inmates, how do you feel DC inmates are treated?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 2



### Please give an example of better or worse treatment:

Inmate Responses
The staff put us – DC people – all in a box together, also we are not from here so it is geographic.
They believe that all DC people are lying about anything we bring to the staff. They are always on the defense.
Staff seem to target DC inmates automatically.
We don't have anything coming at all.
The stereotypical generalization that the worst of all are DC inmates.



I'm a sucker, ducking all compound issues to try and make parole because disciplinary write-ups can get me years, where other inmates lose good time, and I am forced into a bad situation.

We are labeled because we are from DC, and there are more transfers because of DC status. They associate us with every problem that happens.

It's like a stereotype and they already have their minds made up based on hearsay.

Prejudice and biased treatment with education and job opportunities and lack of assistance from unit teams.

It's like a rule about DC inmates that COs have. I can't really explain it, but we are definitely treated worse.

Unit teams are not adequate to handle DC caseloads.

The staff don't like us because we are from DC. But the inmates respect us even if they don't like us.

There is constant harassment.

The Cos are very disrespectful to us all because of what they hear about us as a whole.

We are unable to get good jobs or able to participate in good programs but the people from around here are considered a priority.

Nobody likes DC inmates.

They think all of us are trouble.

You're stereotyped for many reason: where you're from, your religion, and mostly not having a federal crime. People hate you just because your last three digits in your federal number are 007.

Because we are from DC, we are considered troublemakers.

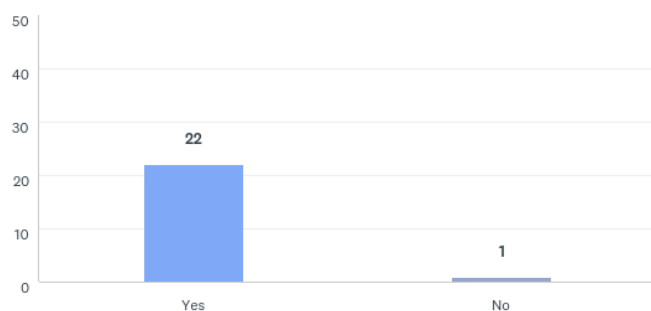
We are stigmatized because of the Lorton reputation. Staff have a tendency to challenge DC in an effort to try and meet the stigmatized aggressions that's assumed. Oftentimes a DC inmate has to defend himself, whether verbally or physically, and whether he is respectful or not, he's dealt a bad hand by still being locked down and losing his privileges.

It seems like everyone is against us.

Most have stigmas for DC inmates that comes with being from DC.

**If you had the opportunity to be closer to DC during the last 24 months of your incarceration to prepare for your reentry, would you be interested in doing so?**

Answered: 23 Skipped: 4



**Please explain why or why not:**

Inmate Responses
It really doesn't matter, but I would like to. I'm leaving soon anyway.
I want to be closer to family.
I would like to be close to my family.
Because I'm already a year to the house and I'm not trying to be waiting for the halfway house when I get to where they try to send me.
To reestablish better family interactions.
I have people that I communicate with on the east coast and the south that are trying to prepare me to come to certain areas to live and work in case other areas are not available.
Being closer to people for visits/travel.
To get to know, or re-know, my family.
Visitation, networking, and transitional reasons.
To facilitate visits with family and attorneys.
Because I could be closer to my family and be able to get visits and be around more DC inmates.
I need to be closer to home to get in touch with people to see family and it makes my transition easier to the community.
Because I would be a whole lot better being close to home.
Family closeness.
I don't care, I just want to go home.
I would be able to see my family more often.

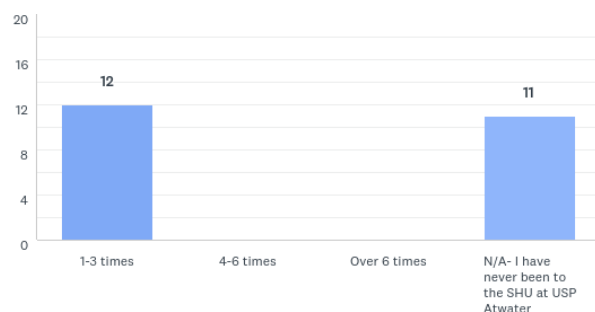
I'm trying to get closer to family.
To be closer to loved ones and family! Getting back acquainted with home is always a better means to focus on making it home. To hug, kiss, and enjoy my family on visits would be joyful.
I would like to be closer to because of the possible contact to my children and grandchildren, also for my safety.
Because it would afford me the opportunity to reconnect with DC professional involvement and community benefits up close instead of from a distance. Also, it would afford me the opportunity to reconnect with my family to provide them with the detail on the things I need done, prevalent to my reentry.
I could see my family.
To properly prepare for release.

### Is there anything else you would like to share about the treatment of DC inmates?

Inmate Responses
Some of us have been in the penitentiary too long and its hard for me to get to an FCI, even though my points have been low.
Very unfair treatment.
If "some" DC inmates get into an incident, "all" DC inmates can be punished and shipped away from prisons close to the District.
We are far from home, we need our own prison and the laws not to change for us.
The unit teams – counselors, unit managers, and case managers – are not trained to deal with DC caseloads, and therefore need training to deal with someone who has been sentenced with a front and back number.
It's unfair, period.
We are the most stereotyped prisoners in the BOP and it's mainly based off perception.
Being from DC we are already stereotyped as DC Blacks: there is no such gang. We are know as knuckleheads and troublemakers (I am not), and it is said that because most DC prisoners are incarcerated for murder, that we will staff a person fast, etc.
DC inmates have a different culture and understanding about the reality of their situations. Therefore, these notions place a target on DC inmates! Where prejudice and neglect as outlaws and outcasts, deprive us of the opportunity to achieve in the same manner as the residents of these foreign states. This is what causes us to hold to the recidivism rate.
We need to be closer to home.

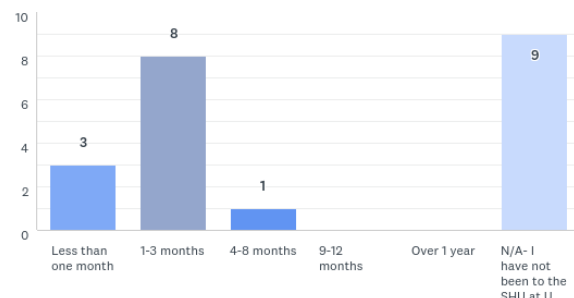
### How many times have you been in the SHU at USP Atwater?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 4



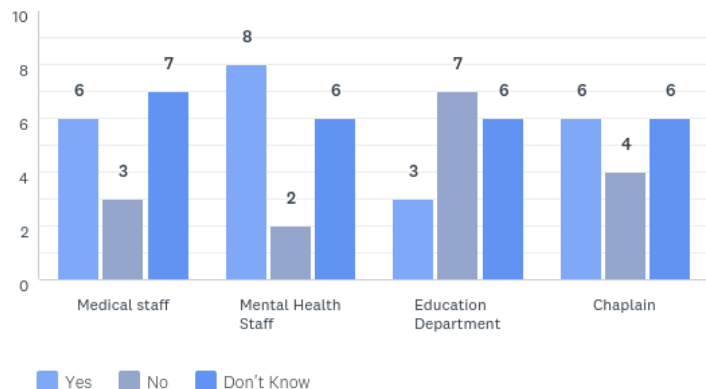
### What is the maximum time you have spent in the SHU at one time in USP Atwater?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 6



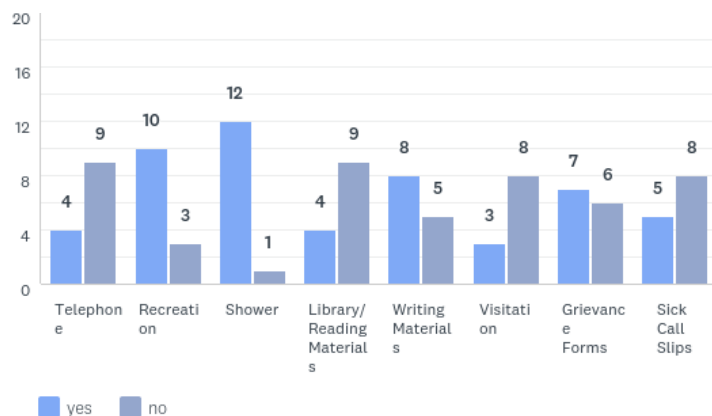
### Did the following conduct weekly rounds

Answered: 16 Skipped: 11



**Did you have access to the following:**

Answered: 13 Skipped: 14



**Is there anything else you would like to share about the SHU at USP Atwater?**

Inmate Responses
I was in SHU for two extra months. They said it was because they didn't have bed space and also because the compound was on lockdown. I went to SHU mid September, and I supposed to have come out in mid-October, but I came out in the end of December.
It's depressing.
They don't give us deodorant in the SHU.
Staff are very unprofessional, rude, pitiful, unjust, etc.
The staff here at USP Atwater do not make rounds in the SHU. And the officers in the SHU do not provide for needs that are required in the SHU. Just not one to two weeks ago they allowed a guy to die because they refused to see that he got medical attention when he requested it.
The staff do not make their 30 minute rounds and don't respond accordingly to the emergency response button most of the time, and when they do it's late.
They don't respond to psychology requests and medical just let someone die.

**What is the most positive aspect of USP Atwater?**

Inmate Responses
I like the California heat during the summertime.
It's average.
There are no harmful things going on here for real.

Nothing.
There are some decent staff.
The weather.
There is not a positive aspect of prison, period.
Nothing.
Challenge program.
Nothing.
UNICOR program.
There are a few good staff members who are good like the CMC and a few others.
Nothing.
That I am able to make it home in October.
They haven't killed me mentally or physically.
As of right now they receiving a new warden! This might be the plus factor...
Reentry, possibly.
There isn't any positive aspect at USP Atwater.

### What is the most negative aspect of USP Atwater?

Inmate Responses
Programming and education.
We stay on lockdown too much
Lack of real programming.
Discipline and constant housing rotation.
Racism and programming/education.
The mentality of the warden (which has trickled down) that it is his duty to punish us and make our lives miserable.
Everything.
Everything.
Everything.
They lock us down for any little thing that happens like they want us to act out more, so they can have a reason for what they are doing to us.
Institutional lockdowns.
Everything.
The administration.
A lot of this place, for real.
This place is a modern day concentration camp!
Everything about this spot is negative – why, because the staff aren't inmate positive/ benefit-oriented and their outlook is not to help make a positive transition, their objective is solely BOP oriented in enforcing the infraction, fines, or what they see fit as a requirement.
Just about everything is negative at USP Atwater.
Staff personnel abusing their authority.

### Please provide one recommendation you would give to improve the conditions of confinement at USP Atwater.

Inmate Responses
Less lockdowns because they mess up legal work we are trying to do. We are on lockdown way too much.
Open the prison from lockdowns, identify the damn problem and get their ass off the pound, if someone doesn't want to be here let them go on elsewhere. Don't no one monkey stop no show. But I'm sad to say BOP has declared the penitentiaries as warehouses.
More meaningful vocational programs.
Education, having it available for people that want it.
An understanding that we are human beings and that it is not their duty to punish us for no reason.
Better staff for case management. Better food, jobs, and less mass punishment.
My release would greatly improve my outlook on Atwater.
Allow the Challenge programs to continue during institutional lockdowns.
The issuance of hygiene products and laundry being done, as well as passing out cleaning supplies.
That we have more access to more things.
Close the entire institution down - and I'm not being facetious in my answer.
Stop charging us money for write-ups and shots.

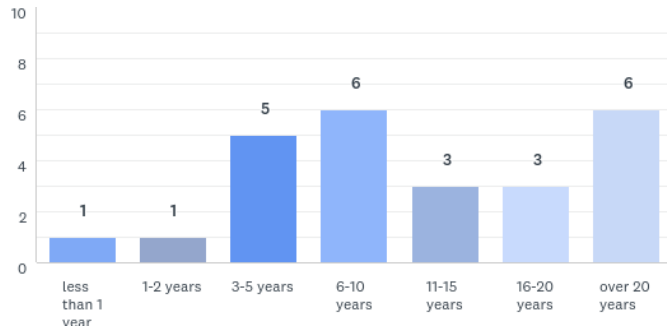
The recommendation I would give is to retrain the staff to not be overseers, but to be real trained specialists who engage inmates in building and training their intellect, to find out what needs they have to be met, in terms of having the inmate evolve. Instead of hiring staff who are not in tune and don't know the specific requirements of their titles as case manager or counselor, who only sit around and "robot" or follow what their superiors push to them on paper without instruction on how to counsel or case manage, etc.

Improve the negative mentality of the officers, improve the education department, better access to the recreation department and the recreation yards, improve the commissary, the food in the kitchen, and especially the medical department.

JUST staff personnel!

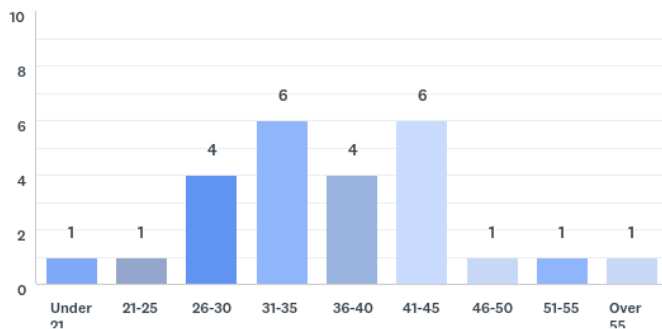
### How long have you been incarcerated overall?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 2



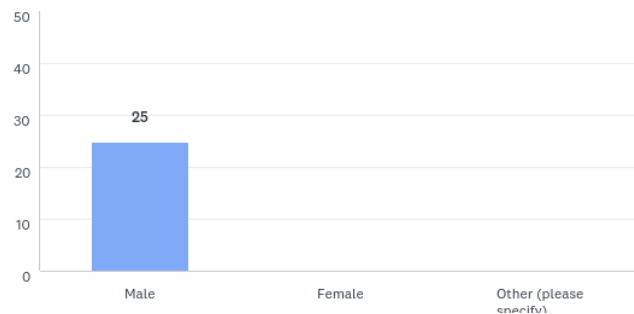
### How old are you?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 2



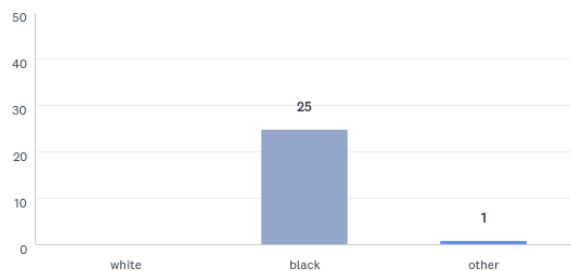
### What is your gender?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 2



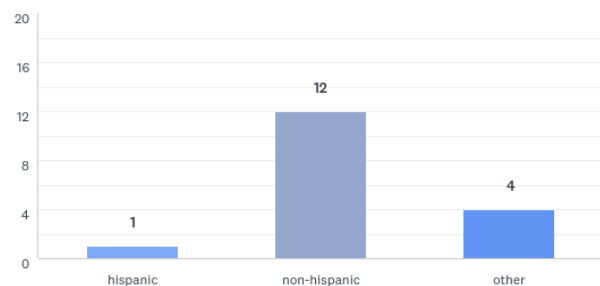
### With what race to you most closely identify with?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 1



**With what race to you most closely identify with?**

Answered: 17 Skipped: 10



**Is there anything else you would like to share with the CIC about your experience at USP Atwater?**

#### Inmate Responses

The warden has instituted a policy which consists of making it difficult for us to obtain books. We can only buy books through the warden and there is a 30% or 40% mark up on the actual price of the book. We can no longer order books from books stores, book outlets, or amazon. And if our loved ones purchase books on our behalf and have the book company send it, this institution will send the book back. This is the only institution that I know of that does this. It is extortion - the 30% to 40% mark up goes to who? The Warden.

Wait time for phone for 30 minute calls to 100. Lock downs. Block contact because it is the same as another relative has. Inmates don't want to take shortcuts, so folks get new numbers. Mail – we are no longer getting birthday cards but copies instead.

Its completely unfit and doesn't meet BOP standards as far as rules and regulations.

I hope that there is some substance in the form of change, in the much needed issues addressed, not just for me, but for every inmate who put forth his/her claims. I've noticed these surveys and interviews happen regularly but the things that are elucidate, have only festered.

They don't respond to the emergency button because someone just died because of that.

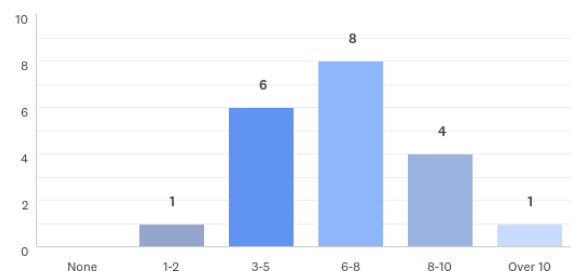
I'm currently in the SHU for no reason! I was locked up on investigation but a disciplinary report was never written. I think the situation was established and set up between staff, because I was complaining and in the process of filing grievance about being inappropriately transferred 500 miles outside of my regional location.

The staff here jokes about our situations not knowing that most of our situations are life threatening, like mine. To tell other inmates that someone is a snitch or rat is a way to get somebody they don't like hurt or killed.

Really, it's been quite uncomfortable! and miserable.

**Can you recall how many times in the past 12 months the facility has been on lockdown?**

Answered: 20 Skipped: 7

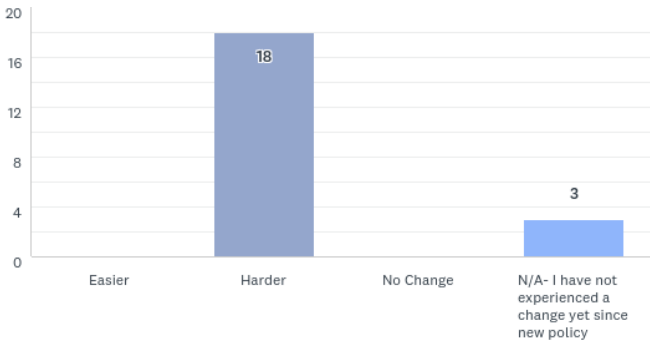


**Can you recall the reasons for such frequent lockdowns?**

Inmate Responses
Escape, violence, assaults, staff assault. The warden is creating a subtle undercurrent of tension.
Alterations and rumors.
Fights.
Small incidents like fights – any fight: scuffles, officers provoking/harassing inmates.
August 2017 – We came off lockdown; October 2017 – an inmate assaulted staff; January 2018 – too many fights. There was also an escape. With the lockdowns, at times there have also been cell searches, no commissary, no clean linens, and no stamps for weeks.
Various incidents – escapes, fights, petty stuff.
Somebody tried to escape from here, a lot of fights, and an inmate attacked an officer.
Different incidents – fights, altercations with the CO's, escape.
Fighting (Mexicans vs. Blacks) and shakedowns.
Fights, administrative reasons, assaults on staff.
Alleged Staff assaults, inmate on inmate assaults, supposedly shortage of staff, supposedly a window that was cracked, staff anniversaries, major of minor shakedowns.
One was an inmate escape, three months later a staff member called an inmate a bitch and the inmate attacked the officer, a couple times for fights, a window that was broken, shortage of staff, and someone was at the door of a unit that he did not live in.
Violence with staff and inmates.
Racial issues.
Stupid stuff that we shouldn't be locked down for.
Anything.
Officers and inmates alike talking trash to people not knowing who the person is or the person's mental state.

**With Atwater's new book policy, have you experienced a change in the way you receive books?**

Answered: 21   Skipped: 6



**If your experience has changed for better or worse, please describe how it has changed:**

Inmate Responses
We are being extorted – there is a mark up and we must go through the warden to get the books.
For religious purposes, I teach other inmates Arabic, and the 30% markup on books isn't helping. I have requested a book three times and haven't gotten an answer.
It has been worse for me, because at the moment the Imam (leader) of the Muslim community and I need books in order to lead, teach, and guide.
I'm paying 30% more for books now from commissary. No hardcovers allowed: they made me send books home and rip covers off.
They are said to be very picky and you get charged.
I used to get around 3 to 4 books a month, now it takes about a month to get a book.
It has been a problem because that's how I have been getting through with my time.
We now have to pay 30% more for books.
I haven't been able to obtain any recent reading material due to high cost.
A lot of things have been stopped from coming in.
I have not able to receive books.
They are extorting us to get books by charging a 30% mark up to get the books.
It's been worse.
My experience has changed for the worse because books have to be ordered through the company chosen by warden, plus 30% extra has to be paid of what books cost, plus you have to pay for shipping and handling.



I'm in college and told that the mark up doesn't apply to education material. Wrong. They were getting ready to send my school book back to the college because they did not order it.
It has changed for the worse, due to the fact that I am being charged or extorted for a 30% mark up on the price.
It's "extortion" at it's best, we have to purchase books from a vendor they provide with a 30% mark-up.

### What reason were you given for your transfer to USP Atwater (if any)

Inmate Responses
No shot, but discipline reasons.
Discipline.
I came because of fighting.
I was transferred with 35 other DC inmates following a riot at a different facility.
I was transferred following a disciplinary infraction.
I wasn't given any reason.
Retaliation after I filed a grievance following a discipline issue.
Staff said I was involved in an incident, but there were threats against me.
I wasn't given a reason for why I was transferred.
I don't know why I was transferred.
They haven't explained it to me.
Further disciplinary action.
Being a victim of a stabbing assault.
Fighting.
It wasn't safe for me to go back on the compound at my old facility.
False allegations of staff assault due to staff destroying my personal belongings and property out of spite and malice.
For my education and safety from contracts on my life.
There wasn't a reason, I even asked my counselor to look into it.
I was transferred following a disciplinary infraction at a different facility.
I asked to be transferred closer to home but I was still not put in my region.

### Have you ever had to pay more than \$25 for an FRP payment, If yes, how much? Why?

Inmate Responses
I once had to pay \$100 in one month.
My payments have been \$50, \$40, \$50 – three payments per quarter.
I was put on Refuse status – I cannot buy labels for legal mail, no phone, no law library computer. They said that it was part of a DHO sanction, but the payment should be separate for court fines. I wrote a grievance to the region but did not get a response. The J+C says that the fine is supposed to be paid only from prison work. They tried to make me pay \$85 a month, when other people are paying \$25 a quarter.
I missed a \$50 payment and was told that if I did not make the payment, I would lose my transfer when the transfer came, and I was told that I would not make more than \$5 per month.
They tried to say that I wasn't paying at my other facilities, and so I have to pay back-pay.
I was working in UNICOR, and they took half my pay for the payment.
Right now I owe \$250, but have none of it due to no family support.
They take money from me that my family sends me for my well-being. When the judge ordered in my judgment and commitment that I'm only to pay this fine of FRP according to my "prison pay," meaning income that I make from having a prison job. But USP Atwater doesn't like to hire people to work as they are supposed to, and for inmates they do hire, their pay is cut short.
These people at USP Atwater has been extorting me for \$75 a month not even before I had a job or went to A&O. They just got slick and drop it to \$40 this month I guess because they know that y'all were inquiring about it.
I was put on FRP refusal status at Atwater, and my account was encumbered.
If you don't pay FRP payments, Atwater encumbers your account.
I transferred facilities: at my old facility my \$FRP payment was \$25 every three months, and at Atwater, it is \$65 every three months. My J&C order says FRP funds should only be taken from "institutional wages."
At my old facility my FRP payment was \$25 per payment period but at Atwater I was told to pay \$100. My J&C says that payments should be based on my prison job.
My FRP Payments are \$25 per month, if you do not make a payment, Atwater freezes commissary and erase all contacts (phone/email).
My J&C order says that funds should only be taken from my "institutional wages."



District of Columbia  
Corrections Information Council

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