



Georgia Department of Corrections Family Day 10/17/08



Family Members' Questions, Concerns and Suggestions

Question: When Garner was Commissioner recreational items were taken away, can they be returned to inmates?

Answer: We understand your concern, but those types of recreational equipment and activities will not return to the Department. All inmates are allowed to participate in recreational activities such as basketball, soccer, softball and Wellness Walks. These activities are offered daily when weather permits.

Question: Which facilities have partnerships w/Vocational Schools?

Answer: All of the state facilities are covered by an agreement with one of the Adult Technical colleges. There are 68 vocational classes, and 22 skill training classroom at 24 facilities. All facilities have On the Job Training programs. Upon program completion participants earn certificates of completion from the Technical College.

Question: Why isn't there Vocational School training at county facilities?

Answer: County facilities are work camps. We believe that work is fundamental to rehabilitation. However, in some cases the offender may transfer to a facility that offers vocational training when he comes close to the end of his sentence.

Question: Can inmates have health insurance through their family?

Answer: Health care for inmates is the largest expense in the Georgia Department of Corrections budget. Many ideas, including private insurance by the offenders' family, if they can afford it, are being explored. However, until alternative methods of payment are adopted and approved, the Department has a constitutional requirement to provide health to offenders.

Question: Will family members be able to send funds to inmates electronically?

Answer: Beginning January 1, 2009, the Department will implement Process Banking, an on-line system whereby family members will be able to

send funds to their loved ones via the internet. This system will also allow probation fees to be paid on-line via Western Union.

Question: Can an e-mail system be implemented that would allow family members to send e-mails to a central location, mailroom at facility, and then staff members distribute e-mail to inmates?

Answer: The Department will explore the feasibility of emails being sent to inmates from family members.

Question: Can the Department rethink triple bunking and two meals a day? This leads to fighting and stealing.

Answer: Prison construction is very costly. The Department has implemented triple bunking to keep pace with a growing prison population without doing costly prison construction. This initiative has helped to minimize the county jails backlog. The two meals a day provision is a result of a four day work week. The meals provision maybe revisited when the Department reviews the four day work week in the future. Regardless of any initiative the Department implements, offenders will be held accountable for their actions.

Question: Can inmates be provided with 21st Century training so that they will be prepared for the workforce when released?

Answer: All training is in labor market demand occupations as designated/identified by the Department of Labor.

Question: Can training, medical in particular, be provided to staff that are transporting inmates?

Answer: The Department is implementing a new statewide Transportation System. As a part of this initiative, all staff that will be assigned to this system will be trained on inmate movement and transport.

Question: Why at Smith and Dooly SP inmates are not being allowed to go to medical in a timely manner due count not being cleared?

Answer: It is crucial that the count clears in all prisons. As such there is strictly no movement during count. There are those instances when count procedures and emergencies will prolong counting process. If for any reason there is an extraordinarily long protracted count; alternative measures are put into place. In such an event medical will go to the buildings to distribute medications.

Question: Can the Department recruit ex-offender's family members and Correction Officers to serve on DOC's Board?

Answer: The Governor, subject to confirmation by the Senate, shall appoint all members. In order to have designated seats for ex-offenders family members and Correctional Officers, the current state statute would have to be amended.

Question: Can the Department add more parenting classes for inmates who have children?

Answer: We currently offer a parenting program in all our female facilities. Additionally, a new program called Active Parenting, which is evidence-based and has very good national outcomes, is being considered.

Question: Why are inmates being moved from Wayne to Long? Can this information be placed on DOC's website?

Answer: Primarily due to the age and condition of the physical infrastructure. In order to continue to operate, the facility would require approximately \$1.3 million in repairs. Additionally, annual operating costs reach close to \$3.6 million, for an average cost of just under \$50 per inmate, per day. In contrast, the 192-bed Long County facility in Ludowici is three years old, and has an annual operating budget of approximately \$2.4 million, or \$38 per inmate, per day. As a result, the Department plans to move both the staff and inmates from Wayne to the more efficient Long facility, realizing an annual savings of approximately \$3 million. This information is on GDC website in the form of a press release dated September 5th

Question: Can healthier food selections be placed in commissary?

Answer: We are currently in negotiations with the vendor to add healthier food choices.

Question: Can inmates go to the commissary on an additional day now that they are only receiving two meals?

Answer: Offenders are given a one-time visit to the inmate commissary with a maximum spending allowance of \$60. To be given another opportunity at the commissary will create a significant storage problem.

Question: Why are inmates being required to sign forms for social security cards and birth certificates?

Answer: This process is part of the Department's Re-Entry efforts. Having a social security card aids the offender in gaining employment once he is released. The birth certificate enables the offender to receive proper identification. Without proper identification one cannot become gainfully employed, cash payroll checks, or get a driver's license.

Question: When is money posted to inmates' accounts?

Answer: In most cases money orders are posted the day they are received unless it is received on a non business day, holiday, or if money order requires verification.

Question: How does DOC protect personal information provided by inmates' and visitors for verification purposes?

Answer: Personal information is provided to GDC for background verifications. The staff that handles this are trained and certified through the Georgia Bureau of Investigations (GBI). The GBI monitors and audits this process on regular basis ensuring all precautions and security procedures are adhered to. Should they discover a breach of protocol, action is taken against the operator (up to criminal charges) and they are de-certified immediately. This information is maintained in a secure file in the personnel office and not in the offender's file.