
Formerly Incarcerated Workers Workplace Health Project

— JM Wong —
FIGHT Family
(Formerly Incarcerated Group Healing Together)

Acknowledgments

- UW DEOHS & PTOPTOP for funding and support
- Building off of prior MPH thesis work supported by Professor Bill Daniels

Taste of Freedom: The Meaning & Experience of Work for Formerly Incarcerated Asian Pacific Islander Individuals

- FIGHT (Formerly Incarcerated Group Healing Together), APICAG (API Cultural Awareness Group), Black Prisoner Caucus
 - Maria Kang, Shajuanda Tate, John Page
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Background

California is paying inmates \$1 an hour to fight wildfires

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Clallam Bay Prison Work and Food Strike

Meal strike, restrictions reported at Clallam Bay Corrections Center

Move called protest over food, other conditions

By [Paul Gottlieb](#)

Tuesday, October 8, 2019 8:36pm | [NEWS](#) [CLALLAM COUNTY](#)



CLALLAM BAY — Clallam Bay Corrections Center inmates went on strike Monday in protest over food and other conditions at Clallam Bay Corrections Center, refusing to eat their meals, a state Department of Corrections spokesperson said Tuesday.



- We demand a full revision of the Department of Correction's Job/Work policy (Class I, II, and III). Our labor is fundamentally important to keep the prison system running. We have been "earning" the same amount since we can remember; however, store items' price have gone up around 200% in the last 15 years. Therefore, we demand a reasonable increase across all Jobs' "compensation" in order to keep doing the necessary work to keep this "environment" running.

Total Worker Health Approach

“Traditional occupational safety and health protection programs have primarily concentrated on ensuring that work is safe and that workers are protected from the harms that arise from work itself. **TWH builds on this approach through the recognition that work is a social determinant of health; job-related factors such as wages, hours of work, workload and stress levels, interactions with coworkers, and access to leave and healthful workplaces all can have an important impact on the well-being of workers, their families, and their communities.** TWH explores opportunities to not only protect workers, but also *advance* their health and well-being by targeting the conditions of work [...] Risk factors in the workplace can contribute to health problems previously considered unrelated to work” (CDC, 2013)

The story of incarceration & reentry through the angle of work

- Incarcerated workers → Formerly Incarcerated workers
 - Incarceration → Reentry
 - Work as a measure of successful transition & compliance
 - Work as a measure of rehabilitation
 - Surveilled and overseen by probation, parole, work release
 - Access to work and ability to maintain work are centered
 - Other aspects of work: wages, occupational safety are not centered
 - Vulnerable to exploitation at work environments
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Specific Aims

- Deepen understanding of occupational health hazards that formerly incarcerated workers face
 - Utilize a bottom-up approach to understand and implement interventions for addressing occupational health hazards
 - Community Based Participatory Research (Advisory Board)
 - Qualitative Research (Focus Groups)
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Methods

- Recruitment through word of mouth, email and fliers
 - Conduct Focus Groups to engage with formerly incarcerated workers about their working conditions
 - Eligibility criteria:
 - 21 years and over
 - Employment experience
 - Consent to participating in focus group
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Workplace Well Being for Court Involved communities

Court involved and formerly incarcerated individuals face workplace discrimination, including increased unemployment and lack of wage equities. These have health consequences, mentally, physically and emotionally. We are a group of community members conducting focus groups to understand these workplace experiences.

These questions are confidential and we ask in the spirit of having a variety of experiences reflected in our focus groups.

You will be compensated \$60 for your attendance in the form of a gift card. Please select which session you can attend. We will email or call you to confirm attendance. Thank you!

Email address *

Valid email address

This form is collecting email addresses. [Change settings](#)

Name

Short answer

Short answer text

WORKPLACE HEALTH PROJECT

Workplace Health Project is recruiting focus group participants to collaborate on addressing the challenges of the occupational hazards that formerly incarcerated and justice involved individuals face at work.

If you have experienced discrimination seeking employment because of your felony or justice involved status, or face challenges with the day-to-day of work life, we want to hear from you.

Participation includes:

- 1 focus group meeting for one hour and a half (in August)*
- 2 workshops - 2 hours each (August and September)*
- 1 Community Event: Roundtable discussion/Report back/Feedback (October)*
- 1 short questionnaire prior to participation

Food and stipend provided for participation.

(There will be a follow up email and/or phone call with detailed information, and for additional questions prior to participation)

If you have any questions, we can be reached at:

Email: workplace.health2019@gmail.com

Phone: 206.880.1749

* dates are TBD

Advisory Committee, Focus Groups & Workshop

Conducted biweekly advisory board meetings consisting of 3 community members

Conducted 2 focus groups in July and August with 8 participants and 5 participants respectively

Conducted 1 workshop in September

Workplace Wellbeing for Former and Current Court Involved Communities

WORKSHOP

Saturday, September 21, 2019

12:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Facilitators: JM Wong, ~~Shajuanda Tate~~, and John Page

Guest Speakers

Erica Pablo,
Civil Rights
Strategic
Advisor, City of
Seattle, Office
for Civil Rights

**William
Castillo,**
Mental Health
Counselor

**Alex
Bergstrom,**
Legal Assistant,
Columbia Legal
Services

Topics:

- **Re-entry:** Fair housing, and employment
- **Mental Health:** Trauma informed care and healing work
- **Legal Financial Obligations (LFOs):** Current laws, policies, and available programs and services to assist with resolving LFO debt
Q&A session to follow.

@ Southwest Branch – Seattle Public Library

9010 35th Ave SW
Seattle, WA 98126

Light snacks and lunch will be provided. If you have dietary restrictions, or any other questions, please email workplace.health2019@gmail.com, or call 206.880.1749.

Preliminary Findings

- Emerging Themes
 - Negative mental health & stress as primary occupational hazard due to challenging experiences related to seeking work
 - Precarious work
 - More interest in discussing barriers to work
 - Could not separate hazards individuals experienced at work from the obstacles they encountered seeking work & pressures of the criminal legal system
 - Wanted to discuss the other components in their lives that make work possible: access to housing, limitations around Ban the Box, access to entry jobs, access to training while in DOC custody, LFO and restitutions (forms of deductions)
 - Probation system and its impact on work
 - Safe and stable housing crucial to finding work
 - Seeking union work
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IMPACTS & WAY FORWARD

- Enthusiasm amongst impacted communities
 - Opportunity to address poor mental health and stress as occupational health hazard across occupations
 - Impact on recidivism
 - Moving forward:
 - Create a resource hub to support individuals
 - Build community around Formerly Incarcerated Workplace Health
 - Opportunities for ways to engage criminal legal policy & labor advocacy
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