



INCARCERATED WORKERS IN IOWA: ISSUES AND DEMANDS



Work Options and “Wages”

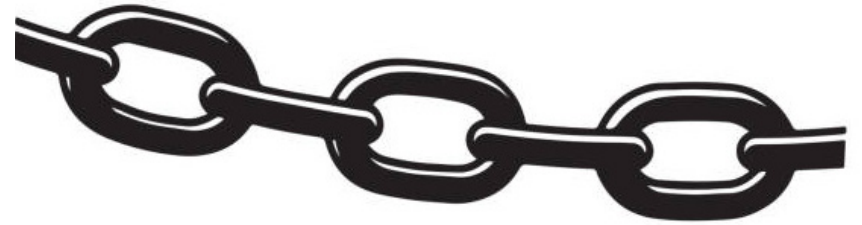
People in Iowa have two options to earn money while in prison:
1) Work for the prison doing everyday maintenance operations to run the prison

Or

2) Work for Iowa Prison Industries (IPI), a private company that profits off of prison laborers

Most “jobs” pay less than \$1/hour, thanks to the loophole in the 13th amendment which states that *“Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, **except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted**, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.”* This means that labor laws such as the minimum wage, rights to collectively bargain and unionize, and other legal protections do not apply to incarcerated individuals.

Incarcerated individuals who choose to work for the prison earn “wages” on a scale from 28 cents to 71 cents per hour. Wages are higher with IPI, but the money the worker takes home still ends up being far less than the federal minimum wage. Not only would this not suffice to purchase products outside of prison walls, but commissary items available to those inside of prison are so overpriced that an individual must work 8-20 hours to buy one stick of deodorant and 4-18 hours for a bar of soap. See the following tables for more examples:



ABOLISH

ALL

PRISONS



Demands from Incarcerated Workers

All of these issues have led incarcerated workers in Iowa to issue the following demands:

- **Pay workers a living wage.**
- **End “rest and remainder” practice (where IPI can take up to 50% of workers’ wages for restitution fees for victims unrelated to individual workers’ cases).**
- **Ensure people of color are placed in lead work positions when qualified.**
- **Remove the IPI employee who caused the health issues.**
- **Allow for paid vacation and sick time for incarcerated workers.**
- **Give workers due process rights when they are being investigated and allow for incarcerated representatives to be present during investigation processes. IPI should have a grievance system separate from the institution’s grievance.**

Unless noted otherwise, all information in this zine was provided by incarcerated workers in Iowa or the Iowa Prison Industries website.

Commissary 2023-10-03

1 of 3

OP-WI-01 Incarcerated Individual Work Programs		Per Hour			
Allowance Range A (entry level - many jobs)		\$ 0.28	\$ 0.34	\$ 0.38	
Allowance Range B (some skill - most jobs)		\$ 0.39	\$ 0.44	\$ 0.48	
Allowance Range C (high skill - limited jobs)		\$ 0.49	\$ 0.54	\$ 0.59	
Allowance Range D (restricted - few jobs)		\$ 0.61	\$ 0.67	\$ 0.71	

Shampoo/Conditioner		10/3/2023	6% & 7%	Range A	Range B
Item Number	Item	Price	Price Plus Tax & PFS	Hours Required	Hours Required
1201	Alberto VO5 Conditioner	\$ 1.56	\$ 1.76	6.3	4.5
1202	Pantene (Pro-V) Conditioner	\$ 7.28	\$ 8.23	29.4	21.1
1203	Blue Magic Bergamot	\$ 4.73	\$ 5.34	19.1	13.7
1207	Cond: Sulfer 8 (Medicated)	\$ 4.37	\$ 4.94	17.6	12.7
1208	Alberto VO5 Shampoo 12.5 oz	\$ 1.55	\$ 1.75	6.3	4.5
1209	Pantene (Moist Ren) Shampoo 12 oz	\$ 7.28	\$ 8.23	29.4	21.1
1210	Dandruff Shampoo	\$ 3.43	\$ 3.88	13.8	9.9
1211	Head and Shoulders 2 in 1	\$ 9.75	\$ 11.02	39.3	28.3
1214	Shampoo: Sulfer 8 (Medicated)	\$ 4.75	\$ 5.37	19.2	13.8
1219	Bergamot (Hair Dressing)	\$ 1.93	\$ 2.18	7.8	5.6
1221	Curl Activator (Gel)	\$ 1.90	\$ 2.15	7.7	5.5
1222	Royal Crown (Hair Dressing)	\$ 1.89	\$ 2.14	7.6	5.5
1223	Dove Daily Moist Shampoo 12 oz	\$ 6.90	\$ 7.80	27.8	20.0
1224	Dove Daily Moist Conditioner 12 oz	\$ 6.90	\$ 7.80	27.8	20.0
1225	Hair Food (Herbal Formula)	\$ 2.07	\$ 2.34	8.4	6.0
1227	Hair Thickener, WGO and Honey 4 oz	\$ 7.93	\$ 8.96	32.0	23.0
1228	Luster's Pink	\$ 7.28	\$ 8.23	29.4	21.1
1230	Murray's Pomade	\$ 3.29	\$ 3.72	13.3	9.5
1237	African Pride Magic Gro (Herb)	\$ 8.23	\$ 9.30	33.2	23.8

Soap		10/3/2023	6% & 7%	Range A	Range B
Item Number	Item	Price	Price Plus Tax & PFS	Hours Required	Hours Required
1300	Old Spice Hydrowash Body Wash	\$ 9.88	\$ 11.16	39.9	28.6
1303	Ivory	\$ 0.87	\$ 0.98	3.5	2.5
1304	Lever 2000	\$ 1.40	\$ 1.58	5.7	4.1
1306	Zest	\$ 1.46	\$ 1.65	5.9	4.2
1307	Dove	\$ 2.67	\$ 3.02	10.8	7.7
1308	Neutrogena Facial Bar	\$ 4.51	\$ 5.10	18.2	13.1
1313	Suave Body Wash	\$ 3.41	\$ 3.85	13.8	9.9
1315	Irish Spring (Icy Blast)	\$ 1.21	\$ 1.37	4.9	3.5
1317	Black & White Skin Soap	\$ 3.69	\$ 4.17	14.9	10.7
1320	Tone Cocoa Butter Bar 4.25 oz	\$ 1.69	\$ 1.91	6.8	4.9
1323	Coast (Pacific Force)	\$ 1.34	\$ 1.51	5.4	3.9
1327	Irish Spring (Deep Scrub) 3.75 oz	\$ 1.36	\$ 1.54	5.5	3.9
1328	Next 1 (Moisturizing Bar) 5 oz	\$ 0.82	\$ 0.93	3.3	2.4
1330	VO5 3-in-1 Body Wash	\$ 2.14	\$ 2.42	8.6	6.2

Item Number	Item	Price	Price Plus Tax & PFS	Hours Required	Hours Required
1332	Bodycology Vanilla Body Wash	\$ 7.15	\$ 8.08	28.9	20.7
1333	Dove Body Wash Sensitive Skin	\$ 9.42	\$ 10.64	38.0	27.3

Shaving		10/3/2023	6% & 7%	Range A	Range B
Item Number	Item	Price	Price Plus Tax & PFS	Hours Required	Hours Required
1404	Pro-Tection After Shave Gel	\$ 2.38	\$ 2.69	9.6	6.9
1407	Magic Shave Cream (Regular)	\$ 5.42	\$ 6.12	21.9	15.7
1413	Personna Twin Blade Razor	\$ 0.61	\$ 0.69	2.5	1.8
1414	Bump Razor	\$ 2.05	\$ 2.32	8.3	5.9
1415	Bic Single Blade Razor 2 ct	\$ 0.26	\$ 0.29	1.0	0.8
1419	Pro-Tection Twin Razor	\$ 0.52	\$ 0.59	2.1	1.5
1421	Gillette Mch 3 Razor	\$ 14.30	\$ 16.16	57.7	41.4
1424	Gillette After Shave Gel	\$ 4.03	\$ 4.55	16.3	11.7
1425	Barbasol 1919 Shave Cream	\$ 4.68	\$ 5.29	18.9	13.6

Deoderant		10/3/2023	6% & 7%	Range A	Range B
Item Number	Item	Price	Price Plus Tax & PFS	Hours Required	Hours Required
1500	Speed Stick (Ocean Surf)	\$ 3.32	\$ 3.75	13.4	9.6
1502	Power Up (Drive)	\$ 1.93	\$ 2.18	7.8	5.6
1505	Speed Stick Gel (Ultimate)	\$ 3.63	\$ 4.10	14.6	10.5
1507	Speed Stick (Power Sport)	\$ 3.46	\$ 3.91	14.0	10.0
1508	Old Spice High Endurance Stick D Only	\$ 4.79	\$ 5.41	19.3	13.9
1509	Secret (Powderfresh)	\$ 2.70	\$ 3.05	10.9	7.8
1511	Suave Powder Scent Deoderant	\$ 2.11	\$ 2.38	8.5	6.1
1512	Lady's Speed Stick (Scented) 1.4 oz	\$ 2.46	\$ 2.78	9.9	7.1
1513	Degree (Women's)	\$ 3.24	\$ 3.66	13.1	9.4
1514	Degree (Mens Extreme Blast)	\$ 3.25	\$ 3.67	13.1	9.4

Dental Care		10/3/2023	6% & 7%	Range A	Range B
Item Number	Item	Price	Price Plus Tax & PFS	Hours Required	Hours Required
1606	Close Up (Red Gel)	\$ 3.32	\$ 3.75	13.4	9.6
1610	Sensitive Toothpaste	\$ 3.50	\$ 3.96	14.1	10.1
1611	Effergrip	\$ 5.13	\$ 5.80	20.7	14.9
1612	Fixodent (original) 1.4 oz	\$ 4.89	\$ 5.53	19.7	14.2
1614	Denture Bath	\$ 1.98	\$ 2.24	8.0	5.7
1616	Fresh Mint Denture Cleaner	\$ 2.93	\$ 3.31	11.8	8.5
1617	Efferdent Denture Cleaner	\$ 9.41	\$ 10.63	38.0	27.3
1623	Oral B (soft)	\$ 2.91	\$ 3.29	11.7	8.4
1628	Dental Floss (Loops)(Mint)	\$ 2.79	\$ 3.15	11.3	8.1
1633	Colgate Total Mouthwash 16.9 oz	\$ 5.30	\$ 5.99	21.4	15.4
1635	Biotene Dry Mouth Rinse	\$ 8.54	\$ 9.65	34.5	24.7



IPI's headquarters are on the east side of Des Moines

Other Issues

Of course, issues aren't limited to wages. Health and safety issues continue to run rampant in Iowa prisons. In early 2024, an IPI staff member exposed incarcerated workers to diseases by pulling used toilet paper and tissues out of the trash for re-use without notifying workers. With no access to vacation or sick time, this caused extreme psychological stress alongside the chance of physical contagions.

Racism also continues to be a prevalent issue, as people of color who qualify for leadership positions have been reassigned to lower positions with white workers getting promotions based on good relationships with COs and IPI staff.

To make matters worse, IPI does not have an official grievance procedure to bring up issues, let alone have them addressed. Their response is to guide workers towards the institution's grievance procedure, where requests get denied because the institution claims they don't have authority over IPI work rules.

Local Companies that Currently Contract with IPI

- Game One (custom screen printing and embroidery for sports jerseys)
- H&H LLC (steel trailers that sell for thousands of dollars)
- JetCo (manufacturing trailers, also selling for thousands of dollars)
- Lomont Molding LLC
- PDM Precast (concrete)
- Quantum Plastics
- Diamond Crystal Brands

These companies could actively take a stance against payment of slave wages in their IPI contracts!



Kosmo Cooler



12 Gallon Safe Keeper



EEZY-Gro Planter



Translock Bed Attachment



Insulated Medical Mugs



Commissary 2023-10-03

3 of 3

Item Number	Item	Price	Price Plus Tax & PFS	Hours Required	Hours Required
1637	Colgate (soft) 1 ea	\$ 0.99	\$ 1.12	4.0	2.9
1638	Aquafresh (Extreme Clean)	\$ 5.73	\$ 6.47	23.1	16.6
1640	Colgate Total	\$ 4.76	\$ 5.38	19.2	13.8
3500	Sensodyne Protection + White	\$ 10.40	\$ 11.75	42.0	30.1

Item Number	Item	Price	Price Plus Tax & PFS	Range A Hours Required	Range B Hours Required
2004	Cantu Deep Treatment Masque	\$ 8.45	\$ 9.55	34.1	24.5
2005	Cantu Mens Leave in Cond Cream	\$ 7.30	\$ 8.25	29.5	21.2
2006	Cantu Edge Gel	\$ 7.15	\$ 8.08	28.9	20.7
2007	Cantu Hair Cleansing Shampoo	\$ 7.15	\$ 8.08	28.9	20.7
2008	Cantu Hydrating Hair Cream	\$ 8.45	\$ 9.55	34.1	24.5
2009	African Pride Curling Cream	\$ 7.20	\$ 8.14	29.1	20.9
2010	Ampro Protein Styling Gel	\$ 1.82	\$ 2.06	7.3	5.3

Item Number	Item	Price	Price Plus Tax & PFS	Range A Hours Required	Range B Hours Required
3604	Notebook (8.5" x 10.5")	\$ 2.21	\$ 2.50	8.9	6.4
3605	Legal Pads Yellow 8.5 x 14 50 ct	\$ 1.47	\$ 1.66	5.9	4.3
3606	Letter Pad (8.5" x 11")	\$ 1.27	\$ 1.44	5.1	3.7
3607	Notepad (5" x 8")	\$ 1.46	\$ 1.65	5.9	4.2
3609	Filler Paper	\$ 3.70	\$ 4.18	14.9	10.7
3610	Typing Paper	\$ 2.08	\$ 2.35	8.4	6.0
3626	Envelope (#10 legal stamped)	\$ 0.76	\$ 0.76	2.7	1.9
3629	Postcard (stamped)	\$ 0.53	\$ 0.53	1.9	1.4
3633	Pink Pearl Eraser	\$ 0.44	\$ 0.50	1.8	1.3
3636	Pen (Black)	\$ 0.29	\$ 0.33	1.2	0.8
3637	Pen (Blue)	\$ 0.29	\$ 0.33	1.2	0.8
3638	Pencil (#2)	\$ 0.29	\$ 0.33	1.2	0.8
3650	RSVP Pen (Black)	\$ 0.80	\$ 0.90	3.2	2.3
3651	RSVP Pen (Blue)	\$ 0.80	\$ 0.90	3.2	2.3
3655	Notebook (college composition)	\$ 1.25	\$ 1.41	5.0	3.6

IPI pay starts at 73 cents per hour and can be raised up to two dollars per hour. It takes over 20 years of working to achieve this pay rate. Some of the jobs in this pay scale include making Iowa license plates, working in the Anamosa Braille Shop, and manufacturing other textiles, prints, and apparel.

IPI also has private sector jobs which pay much higher rates. The pay still starts at 73 cents per hour. After 60 days, depending on the job, wages can be anywhere from seven to nineteen dollars an hour, but workers only receive 20 percent of the total check after reductions. For example, for ever 100 dollars earned, the worker

only receives 20 dollars after reductions. The reductions go to pay IPI staff salaries and to purchase products, as well as to IPI's general account. It also is deposited in the state general fund to pay restitution, even if the worker does not owe restitution for their case. These reductions are a huge barrier to financial stability and aid in disguising IPI's role in paying slave wages.

Local Companies and Institutions that have Contracted with IPI for Furniture

- Iowa State University (furniture, including cafeteria and President's Office furniture made by IPI workers)
- Iowa Western Community College, Clarke University, Marquette Catholic High School (lockers)
- University of Northern Iowa (Rod Library, Panther Village, cafeteria furniture)
- Grand View University (L Apartments furniture)
- Waukee Public Library, North Liberty Public Library
- Community Baptist Church (Ankeny)
- St. Theresa Catholic Church (Des Moines)
- St. John's Catholic Church (Des Moines)
- St. Luke the Evangelist (Ankeny)
- St. Mary's Catholic Church (Storm Lake)
- Plus Many More!

Source: <https://www.iaprisonind.com/store/pg/116-Colleges-Universities.aspx>, <https://www.iaprisonind.com/store/pg/191-Project-Photos.aspx>



UNI dorm room and library brought to you by prison labor!



Former ISU President Leath commissioned his new desk from prison labor at IPI, along with much of the university's furniture.



Community Baptist Church Ankeny and St. Theresa Catholic Church Des Moines find Jesus with the help of prison labor.



City of Des Moines Skywalk signage also brought to us by prison labor



North Liberty Public Library furniture by IPI workers