



Justice Organization Sharing Hope & United for Action

THE TRANSFORMATIONAL
JUSTICE TASK FORCE

May 27, 2025



JOSHUA members gathered outside of GBCI on February 23, 2025 to advocate for ending solitary confinement and torturous conditions in our prison system.

About Us & How We Can Help

Dear Friends,

We want you to know that we have received your letters and online messages, with the most recent arriving around early March. Out of the 37 correctional institutions in the state, 16 have individuals who correspond with us. We want to thank you for taking the time to share your stories and experiences as they matter deeply to us. We are committed to doing what we can to be a source of support and a platform for your voices.

As a social justice organization, JOSHUA is honored to share your words, where many of you have given us permission, through our social media, website, and newsletters to our wider community. We want to be an outlet for your truth, and a bridge to those who may not otherwise hear it.

Due to our small team and the high volume of correspondence, it takes us time to open, read, and decide next steps for correspondence. At this time, one person manages the newsletter and communication efforts, so we appreciate your patience as we work to stay in touch. Our goal is to send out newsletters every few months, especially when there are major updates to share.

Many of you know that JOSHUA is a coalition of individuals, community partners, and organizations — including those who have been directly or indirectly impacted by the criminal legal system, housing instability, and other forms of injustice. One of our key efforts is the Transformational Justice Task Force, which meets monthly to discuss how we can collectively improve the criminal legal system.

A major focus of our advocacy is the long-standing effort to close GBCI. We firmly believe that your voice is essential in this movement — to shape policy that affirms the dignity and worth of every human being. True justice must reflect the lived experiences of those most impacted. As we often say: those closest to the problem are closest to the solution.

We remain committed to lifting up the voices of those most impacted by injustice — including those experiencing incarceration, housing insecurity, and systemic exclusion. Invite your loved ones to JOSHUA or to follow us on social media @joshua4justice to see your stories published online.

While we can read your messages via CorrLinks and GettingOut, we're currently unable to respond through those platforms. This is due to account limitations — the JOSHUA profile does not match the names of current staff, which also prevents us from adding funds. We understand that snail mail can be slow and inconvenient, but for now, it is the only reliable way for us to engage in two-way communication. We are working on a solution and ask for your patience as we reconfigure our systems.

Thank you for continuing to trust us with your stories, questions, and reflections. We are honored to walk with you and advocate for a more just world.

With solidarity and hope,

THE JOSHUA TEAM & ITS TRANSFORMATIONAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

Upcoming meetings and events

Transformational Justice Task Force, 4th Thursdays, 6 PM

Prayer Vigil outside of GBCI on the 23rd of each month

Spiritual Leaders Caucus gathers monthly to organize regular vigils and uplift another's work

Events in the future:

- Reentry Simulations
- Solitary Conditions of Confinement Tour

Invite your loved ones to attend. Visit our website to learn more.



WISCONSIN GOVERNOR TONY EVERS HAS HEEDED THE CALL TO CLOSE THE ANTIQUATED, DANGEROUS GREEN BAY CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION (GBCI).

This is an important first step and one that already has support from across both aisles. Closing GBCI is good for those incarcerated and the corrections officers as it is a dangerous environment for both. GBCI opened in 1898 when prisons were built with punishment rather than rehabilitation in mind. The windows are grayed out to deny sunlight from getting in, and reports show that 50% of the infrastructure is in need of replacement. We know that 90% of those incarcerated in maximum security facilities (and 95% overall) will return to our communities. Other states have found ways to invest in Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD) to reduce the number of people being incarcerated, and we are glad that Wisconsin decision makers are seeing this as a major issue to do the same. The Governor has proposed a budget with significant increases in resources for Earned Release programs and Alternatives to Revocations, both of which are proven to safely reduce both prison populations and recidivism.

Not only are there more cost-effective alternatives, but by focusing on treatment, rehabilitation, and job training, those who are incarcerated will be able to more successfully rejoin our communities. It is JOSHUA's hope that positive changes may come out of the Governor's plan by making sustainable investments in our incarcerated folks. Due to truth-in-sentencing and other punitive laws based on misplaced fear, many people in our prisons have long since aged out of committing more crimes while their medical conditions worsen through years of poor diets, neglect, and abuse: all at a great expense to the loved ones of those incarcerated and taxpayers. While we may not fully agree with all parts of the proposal such as the renovating of Waupun Correctional Institution (WCI), another dangerous and outdated facility that should be closed, it is our fervent hope that our legislature will come together with our governor to move towards a sustainable solution. We have been communicating this proposal to our representatives regularly.

Support for Reentry and More

PAN (Prison Aftercare Network)

Mission Statement:

"Serving as an umbrella organization, we seek to connect Christian individuals and ministries, pointing to resources and information that help reduce recidivism."

If you are being released to Green Bay, this may be a resource for you.

The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) and Solitary Watch have a program called *Lifelines to Solitary*, which matches pen pals on the outside with incarcerated individuals in solitary confinement. Contact NRCAT to be a part of this program.

National Religious Campaign Against Torture
PO Box 91820
Washington, DC 20090
(t) 202.547.1920



We are committed to sharing information that will help you upon your release. Here are a several services based out of Green Bay that may help.

Windows to Work reentry program at these institutions:
Kettle Moraine, Green Bay, and Taycheedah

- Participants receive five program components prior to release: Cognitive Intervention, General Work Skills and Expectations, Financial Literacy, Community Resources and Job Seeking Skills. Post release services include accessing food, shelter, clothing, transportation, work supplies, and more.

Forward Service Corporation (FSC)

- Providing support (including financial) and resources for employment with a list of employers who look past a history. There are opportunities for gas and bus vouchers, and additional support for housing. Contact Craig Coleman at (920) 940-6069 or ccoleman@fsc-corp.org

Onsite Support in Green Bay

- Fridays from 8 AM to noon, NWTC and FSC partner to offer a space for individuals facing re-entry after incarceration to come and receive support for employment, resources, and community.

Circles of Support

- Support group for those reentering society and needing resources--housing, employment, clothing, etc. This operates in Appleton, Neenah, Oshkosh, and Green Bay. Call (920) 840-2918 or email circlescanhelp@gmail.com.

These are highlights of recent articles that may be of interest to you. We want you to know that we see the many issues happening in prisons and jails, across the criminal legal system. People out there do care and are making some noise for you through the media and to our legislators.

Green Bay's prison has returned to normal operations. Incarcerated people say it's not all better.

By: Andrew Kennard - August 20, 2024.

Stacy Knapp, whose son is incarcerated at the prison, said in an interview on July 8 that the cells are small and every meal is eaten within feet of the toilet.

"The environment is torture," Knapp said. "Not just that noise level, but also being confined to your cell for essentially 24 hours a day, and not alone, with another human being in that space."

'It's been a living hell': Wisconsin prison phone failures leave families disconnected

The Wisconsin Department of Corrections blames contractor ICSolutions for glitches during a free tablet rollout meant to improve communication.

By Addie Costello / Wisconsin Watch and WPR - May 8th, 2025

WPR and Wisconsin Watch heard from more than 25 people experiencing connection difficulties at multiple prisons. Incarcerated people described dialing a number multiple times before getting through and waiting more than an hour for calls to connect. Family members described hearing their phones ring but receiving no option to connect with the caller; some calls have dropped mid-conversation.

Neither ICSolutions nor its parent company responded to requests for comment. But in an undated statement on its website, the company promised improvements in the "coming weeks," with "significant optimization coming this summer." The statement recommended shifting calls to "off-peak hours" — before 5 p.m. or after 9 p.m. But family members say they are not always available at such hours.

Prisoners in nine of Wisconsin's 36 adult institutions — including all three women's facilities — still lack tablets. The glitches affect them, too, because ICSolutions services the entire phone system, not just tablets.

The corrections department is pausing tablet distribution while trying to fix the reliability problems, Hardtke said.

WISDOM launches campaign to make prison, jail calls free statewide.

New campaign aims to make communication more available to incarcerated people

By: Isiah Holmes - January 9, 2025

This campaign aims to lift the cost of communication in prisons and jails so that incarcerated people do not either become isolated from their loved ones, or force families into debt. Providing calls for people incarcerated in prisons is a \$1.4 billion industry nationally.

Being able to reach people who care about you is a lifeline when you're incarcerated. Additionally, the more access to the outside incarcerated people have, the better their chances of successfully reintegrating into society upon their release.

Shredding of legal mail by Wisconsin prisons worries advocates

Attorneys concerned about the confidentiality, delays and missing documents

By: Andrew Kennard and Frank Zufall - March 24, 2025

A summary of the article:

The Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) implemented a policy in September 2024 requiring all legal mail sent to incarcerated individuals to be photocopied in their presence, with the originals subsequently shredded. This measure aims to prevent contraband from entering prisons. However, the policy has drawn criticism from legal advocates, including the Wisconsin State Public Defender's Office and the ACLU of Wisconsin, who argue that it compromises attorney-client confidentiality, causes delays, and risks the loss of critical legal documents. While the DOC maintains that the policy includes safeguards to protect confidentiality and that it was developed with input from public defenders, concerns persist about its impact on the rights and legal processes of incarcerated individuals.

Vendor failure means Wisconsin prisoners can't buy food or other items

The conglomerate that enables deposits and purchases also runs a prison phone system that has left families disconnected.

By Addie Costello / Wisconsin Watch and WPR | May 22nd, 2025

The online system Wisconsin prisoners rely on to receive money from loved ones recently crashed, leaving them unable to pay for items like extra food and hygiene products. The Wisconsin Department of Corrections contracts a private company, Access Corrections, to allow people outside of prison to transfer funds to those inside. Those transfers occur through the company's app, website, phone system, mail and in-person options. But multiple people told WPR and Wisconsin Watch they could not make deposits beginning this week.

The Wisconsin Department of Corrections contracts with the private vendor to allow people to send money to prisoners, but the system is not working. The Access Corrections website and app display nothing more than a white screen and the message: "Sorry, the service you're looking for is currently unavailable." Those who dial an Access Corrections phone number hear a recorded message saying the company can't take deposits online or over the phone and that it is working to resolve the issue.

In-person deposits at locations throughout Wisconsin are also unavailable, according to an affiliate's website. It is unclear whether physical mail deposits still work. Access Corrections operates deposit systems nationwide, the Wisconsin Department of Corrections says on its website. The company is part of Keefe Group, a conglomerate that includes ICSolutions, which runs a glitchy prison phone system that has left Wisconsin families disconnected in recent months. A Department of Corrections

spokesperson said she was working on a response, which did not arrive by this story's deadline. The Keefe Group did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

Robin Guenterberg typically sends his daughter at Taycheedah Correctional Institution \$300 a month, with Access Corrections collecting a fee. His daughter, who he requested not be publicly named, uses most of that money to buy items from the prison's commissary. She has a chronic health condition and relies on commissary chicken and tuna packets to supplement regularly provided meals, Guenterberg said. The daughter has lost more than 20 pounds since entering prison late last year, Guenterberg said, adding that he and his wife purchase vending machine items during visits and make additional deposits to help their daughter maintain a healthy weight.

If Access Corrections fails to quickly restart deposits, she may lack funds to place a commissary order for next week, Guenterberg said.

Sarah Liebzeit successfully added funds to her incarcerated son's account late Monday night. But issues with his prison-provided electronic tablet have prevented him from spending it at Stanley Correctional Institution, she said. "This is now another issue because the tablets have been just horrible," Liebzeit said. Some incarcerated people work low-wage jobs inside their prison. Their pay falls short of covering phone calls, extra food, hygiene products and medical co-pays without outside deposits, multiple family members told WPR and Wisconsin Watch. Nicole Johnson said her incarcerated boyfriend earns \$20 every two weeks at his Dodge Correctional Institution job. Wisconsin's typical copay charge of \$7.50 per face-to-face medical visit is among the highest in the country — more than half of his weekly earnings. Johnson said she tries to add \$50 to her boyfriend's account twice a month so he can purchase rice and beans to supplement regularly provided meals. "It's just how I take care of him right now," she said. The Access Corrections crash, she added, "makes me sad because I don't want him to be hungry all freaking week."

SNAPSHOTS OF JOSHUA IN ACTION



"Progress has little to do with speed, and much to do with direction."

JOSHUA is a part of the nationwide 50501 movement in response to the United States' current administration. 50 protests, 50 states, 1 movement. It is a coalition of any and all organizations, groups, and individuals who stand for democracy and take to the public to peacefully demonstrate their values for human rights.



JOSHUA joining with WISDOM and its affiliates across Wisconsin for Madison Action Day on April 10, 2025 to communicate our priorities for humanity and equity in the legislature.



On April 5, 2025, JOSHUA joined the nationwide peaceful demonstrations to stand up for our democracy and fellow human beings. Tens of thousands are regularly showing up around the state.

THERE IS STILL MUCH ADVOCACY WORK TO DO. THE JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE HAS
REMOVED ALL OF OUR PRIORITIES FROM THE STATE BUDGET.

WISDOM, our state umbrella organization, has been deeply engaged in advocating for our priorities in the upcoming 2025–2027 State Budget. JOSHUA joined the dozens of leaders who spoke at the official Budget Hearings to convey our message.

At the beginning of the year, Governor Evers introduced a budget that closely aligned with **WISDOM's and our priorities**. His proposal included:

- Closing the Green Bay Correctional Institution (GBCI) without building a new prison.
- Significant investments in alternatives to incarceration, including Treatment Alternatives and Diversions (TAD), the Earned Release Program, and Alternatives to Revocation.
- Restoring access to driver's licenses for undocumented individuals.
- Expanding BadgerCare by accepting federal funding.
- Increasing funding for public education, with a strong emphasis on Special Education.

Last week, the Joint Committee on Finance removed nearly all of these proposals from the budget. Despite extensive public testimony around these key issues, the committee chose to disregard the voices of hundreds of Wisconsin community members. The process is not over. The State Assembly and Senate must still debate and vote on the budget. They have the authority to restore the critical items the Joint Finance Committee removed. Afterward, Governor Evers must still decide whether to sign the final budget. He retains the power to reject any budget that fails to include core priorities of our community. It's essential that we remind the Governor: if he stands strong for our shared priorities, we will stand with him.

On April 10, 2025, JOSHUA joined WISDOM, its statewide network, and other affiliates at the Wisconsin State Capitol in Madison for a powerful Action Day. Nearly 500 of us gathered to speak directly with legislators about critical issues affecting our communities (see bullet points to your left). Despite our strong turnout and unified voices, our concerns are still being ignored in the current state budget proposal.

This means our work is far from over. We must continue to push for a budget that prioritizes us--working families, children, the vulnerable and marginalized, our incarcerated folks, immigrants, etc.

On Tuesday, May 27, we're joining our allies at Citizen Action of Wisconsin for another Action Day at the Capitol. WISDOM and its affiliates are invited to participate in a coordinated day of action, including phone calls and outreach to Governor Evers and state legislators. We are rallying and reiterating to our governor to only accept a budget that includes our priorities. Governor Evers has until July 1, 2025 to sign or veto this budget. Make your voice heard!

If you are able, call or send mail to Governor Evers to tell him to veto any budget that fails to put our people first. Call him at: 608-266-1212

Write to Governor Evers:

P.O. Box 7863

Madison, WI 53707

Project RETURN (Returning Ex-incarcerated People To Urban Realities and Neighborhoods) exists to help individuals who have experienced incarceration make a positive, permanent return to community, family and friends. Services: Circles of Support, Housing, Employment, AODA, Advocacy

1004 N. Tenth St., #200
Milwaukee, WI 53233

EXPO

Ex-Incarcerated People Organizing
Helps with housing and reentry support, workforce development, and advocacy.

17 Applegate Court, Suite 100
Madison, WI 53713

FREE-Reclaiming Women's Freedom
Focuses on prison issues unique to women. Circles meetings of support.
2821 N Vel Phillips Avenue, Ste 117
Milwaukee, WI 53212

The Community

Creates a monthly newsletter specifically for those incarcerated.

PO Box 100392
Milwaukee, WI 53210

Ladies of SCI

This group started to support loved ones at Stanley Correctional Institution, but they have evolved to broader advocacy.

PO Box 524
Dresser, WI 54009



**Supportive
Organizations
Continued**

WISDOM Wisconsin

Multi-faith statewide network organizing communities around the issues that matter to them.

2821 Vel Phillips Avenue, Suite 115
Milwaukee, WI 53212

Staying in Touch

We welcome your letters and stories. Please continue to share what you're experiencing and what matters to you. While some of you have reached out for legal assistance or case support, we want to be transparent — JOSHUA is not equipped to offer legal advice or representation. Our focus is on educating the public, advocacy, and building awareness around systemic issues, like those many of you face every day.

Our next piece of correspondence will be closer to the fall where we will have an update on our progress made towards hosting the traveling solitary confinement cell and a reentry simulation to raise awareness to the extreme difficulties of reintegration after incarceration. The Transformational Justice Task Force is in the beginning stages of forming a roundtable discussion with other local organizations that do advocacy for the criminal legal system. The hope is to form a coalition and larger action moving forward for visibility and community education.

We live out the mission and vision through
Our Core Values:



- *The inherent worth and dignity of every person*
- *Racial and social justice*
- *Equity, education, and advocacy*
- *Community and relationship building*

How to Shine Your Light Webinar June 18, 2025

We are partnering with the National Religious Campaign Against Torture and WISDOM to encourage and teach faith communities to lead vigils to shine a light on the estimated 122,00 people who are held for 23 hours a day in solitary confinement in U.S. prisons and jails.

A Prayer Written by Randall Blue

O' Heavenly Father, I thank you for another day to witness your glory.

It's your loving light that carries me, guides me.

You lift up my spirit, I pray, and ask that you continue to provide me the opportunity to shine your light for someone who's fighting for tomorrow.

Lord, in this environment, in all things, I praise you.

I know the trials I'm faced with each day will only make me stronger, more faithful, and loyal in my walk with you.

I pray as we walk together, that I will not stray from you, despite the temptation, or situation.

Lord, I ask for the strength, and will, to exemplify your loving spirit to others, no matter how I'm perceived.

Lord, bless the light that shines in me, so that my fellow prisoners, and prison staff may see your mighty works in my everyday walk, and talk, not for me, but for you, Lord.

Lord, I choose no one, or nothing before you, I will face each day you give me, by loving my brothers and sisters as I love myself.

Lord, I ask for patience and understanding in dealing with my current situation.

Lord, I offer this prayer for inmates and staff, that they may exercise it with reason, compassion, and respect.

Lord, I ask that you guide our hearts with a message of love, hope, and unity.

I humbly pray my walk and talk throughout this prison has made a difference in someone's life, as I reach for your everlasting love.

Lord, I ask you to provide me peace no matter what happens.

This battle is not mine, when God is for you, who can be against you?

Thank you my Heavenly Father, as I reach the end of another day.

I pray that you will hold me while I sleep, fill me with new strength, so tomorrow I may soar while witnessing to others, and doing your will, not mine.

Always count your blessings, not your problems.

You may believe in something different, I'm in no position to judge no one. I'm hoping whatever you believe, it makes you a better person. Today, someone might misuse you--stay mindful, that person may need your Grace.

JOSHUA

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*Check out
our new logo
as of spring
2025!*