

COVID-19 Update - April 17, 2020

Hi all-

Happy Friday! So here's the deal. . .I've been saying I'd have a budget update but I still don't have answers to share out. Stop me if you've heard this before, but things get rolled out and the guidance is always a little bit behind. Same is true with the federal COVID-19 dollars that were distributed to the states. The state is still awaiting guidance from Treasury on the use of those funds, so we're in a bit of a holding pattern. When I know more, I'll share.

I also wanted to let you know we were made aware that CERT, CNT, and CISM team members are having some issues with their incentive pay. We're on it and will have a resolution next week.

**Maintaining Connections:** Later this evening, an email from me is going out to our population in custody to provide an update on where we are with COVID-19. In that email, I'm also letting them know about some things we're doing to facilitate more communication between them and their loved ones. We've said from the start of this crisis that helping the people in our custody maintain connections with their families and support systems is important. Our partners have stepped up and offered some free calls, emails and video visits to help facilitate more communication. We're going to get some skin in the game too. Starting next week, IDOC will be contributing to help lower the costs for calls and emails to help ease the financial burden on families. The new rates will be announced next week. We're going to be operating under modified restricted status for a while, and we recognize that facilitating more communication is important to improve outcomes and create a safer environment during these difficult times.

**Face to Face:** Not COVID-related, but I wanted to share a video with you. In January, we created an opportunity for Governor Little to visit the East Boise Reentry Center. Board of Correction Vice Chair Dodds Hayden also accompanied the Governor on the visit. As part of that visit, we set up a roundtable discussion for the Governor to hear from some of our staff, CRC residents, and some formerly incarcerated people about the challenges associated with returning to our communities. The Council of State Governments Justice Center filmed the experience and produced this short video. You can check it out [here](#). It's already been on social media a little bit, but we're going to blast it out next week and the Governor is going to do the same. I know this opportunity meant a lot to the Governor, and he's committed to facilitating more interactions like this for key policy-makers. He and his staff have been incredibly supportive our work. A special thank you to Gretchen, Amy, Tim, Kip, and Annie for highlighting the work of you and your peers.

**Bright Ideas:** One thing that the Face to Face event reminded us: people closest to the problem are often the people with the solutions, so again, we want to say please don't hesitate to share your thinking with us. If you have ideas about how to do things different during the COVID crisis or an idea to help improve our agency and our work, please share it by emailing [BrightIdeas@idoc.idaho.gov](mailto:BrightIdeas@idoc.idaho.gov). We want to hear from you!

This crisis has taught all of us the value of creative problem solving. My 4-year-old son is no exception. We rented a movie for the kiddos last weekend on Amazon. My son had a hard time understanding the "rental" concept and couldn't figure out why he couldn't watch it again after the 48-hour window. Trust me, I heard about it all week. What he DID figure out today was how to rent the

movie again without mom or dad knowing. . . So I'll be watching Trolls World Tour again this weekend and trying not to watch for the Amazon bill. I hope all of you have a great weekend!

Thanks-  
Josh