

BY-LAWS OF INMATE FAMILY COUNCILS AT CALIFORNIA PRISONS

ARTICLE I INMATE FAMILY COUNCIL

SECTION 1: NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION

The name of the organization is the Inmate Family Council (IFC). Each institution shall establish and support a local IFC which is independent of the Statewide Family Council (SFC).

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

SECTION 1: MISSION STATEMENT

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and representatives of families of the incarcerated are jointly committed to work together to support connections between inmates and their families through improved communication, shared information, issue identification, and problem resolution.

SECTION 2: SCOPE

The scope of the work of the IFC shall encompass local institutional issues regarding the application of rules, regulations, policies, and practices that affect inmate-family relationships.

ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1: MEMBERSHIP

The council shall be comprised of a cross section of visitors approved to visit an inmate at that institution and meet the qualifications below:

A. Inmate Family Council members

1. Qualifications

- a. Applicants must be available to regularly attend meetings. Applicants must be approved visitors in good standing at the institution and regularly visit an inmate at the institution. Regularly is defined as at least 4 times per year,
- b. Ability to work cooperatively and professionally with others.

2. Applications

- a. Applications shall be made available to interested parties in the Visiting Processing Center or can be obtained from a local IFC member.
- b. Completed applications shall be submitted to both the local IFC and the Warden.
- c. The institution and the IFC will work together to ensure that visitors are aware of the existence of the IFC and have access to the application process.

SECTION 2: SELECTION/APPOINTMENT

- A. At those institutions with an active IFC, future members will be selected by a majority vote of the current IFC.
- B. The IFC shall submit the names of any newly elected members to the Warden for confirmation. The Warden may decline to confirm a candidate based only on the criteria outlined in Section 8A for removal or disapproval of members.
- C. Current members of the IFC whose term is expiring may reapply for membership provided he/she continues to meet the qualifications for membership; however, the member cannot vote on applications while his/her reapplication is pending.
- D. For the reestablishment of an inactive IFC, the selection of new members shall be made by the Warden from the pool of submitted applicants.

SECTION 3: REPRESENTATION

- A. The goal of the IFC is to have, to the extent possible, representation from each area/facility of the institution. All efforts shall be made to ensure that the council composition reflects the diversity of the inmate population.
- B. The IFC shall not have more than ten (10) members.

SECTION 4: VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in the IFC is strictly voluntary. All-members of the IFC agree to work within the guidelines of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation rules, regulations, and policies.

SECTION 5: TERMS

- A. The term of office for members shall be two years.
- B. Members shall not serve more than two consecutive terms. If no applications are received, a standing member can be considered for additional terms.
- C. Current members will serve out their terms. As terms expire, the members may reapply to the council as set forth in By-Laws Section 2A.

SECTION 6: RESIGNATION

Any member wishing to resign from the IFC shall submit a letter of resignation to the IFC Chairperson with a copy to the Warden.

SECTION 7: VACANCIES/REPLACEMENTS

- A. Vacancies may result from a member's death, written resignation, expiration of term, removal for cause, or transfer of inmate. The IFC Chairperson shall fill any vacancy upon written notification of a vacancy. Every attempt shall be made to fill vacancies within sixty (60) days after the vacancy occurs.
- B. Appointments to fill a vacancy shall be made for a new two year term,

SECTION 8: REMOVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF IFC MEMBERS OR NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS

- A. The Warden may, with notice, remove any IFC member or newly elected member for the following reasons:
 - 1, Suspension from visiting for any behavior which jeopardizes the safety and security of the institution, staff, inmates, or visitors.
 - 2. Unprofessional or disruptive behavior which directly interferes with legitimate IFC business.
 - 3. Unexcused absence from two (2) consecutive IFC meetings, "Unexcused absence" is defined as an absence without notification or good cause, Notification shall be to the Warden's office and the IFC Chairperson at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the scheduled meeting when possible,
- B. The IFC, by majority vote, may remove a member for failure to regularly attend the internal IFC meeting held directly before the regularly scheduled IFC Warden's meeting and the IFC Warden's meeting.
- C. When a member no longer meets the qualifications for membership, he or she shall be removed from the IFC.
- D. Any member removed from the IFC may appeal the removal to the respective mission based Associate Director.

SECTION 9: REPRESENTATION OF IFC

- A No individual member shall represent the Council, either in writing or verbally, without majority consent of the IFC.
- B. In communications with outside entities, the IFC shall not purport to represent CDCR's position on any matter without the Warden's approval.

SECTION 10: CDCR REPRESENTATION

- A. The Warden or the Chief Deputy is the CDCR representative at meetings with the IFC and shall invite additional representatives as required per agenda items with due consideration to IFC requests.
- B. If there is a Family Service Coordinator at the institution, he/she shall be required to attend meetings of the IFC if the meeting takes place on his/her regularly scheduled workday.

C. Visiting Lieutenant or Sergeant shall attend the IFC meeting.

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ARTICLE IV OFFICERS

SECTION 1 : DESIGNATED OFFICERS

The Council members shall elect by majority vote for a period of one year: a Chair, a Vice-Chair and a Secretary. Elections for the Officers shall be held annually. The Chair will notify the Warden in writing of the names of new officers.

SECTION 2: QUALIFICATIONS

Any member may serve as an officer of the Council.

SECTION 3: OFFICERS RESPONSIBILITIES

A The Chair shall:

- Call meetings.
- Schedule meetings of the IFC with the Warden and the Warden's designees.
- Prepare and submit the agenda for IFC meetings to the Warden at least ten (10) business days in advance of a scheduled meeting.
- Chair the meetings.
- Notify the Warden in writing of the selection of new members and new officers.
- Coordinate all written and electronic communication between the IFC and Warden.

B. The Vice-Chair shall:

- Assist the Chair in his/her responsibilities.
- Assume the responsibilities of the Chair in his/her absence.
- Ensure that approved minutes of IFC meetings with the Warden are posted for review on the IFC bulletin boards for review by visitors.
- Maintain IFC bulletin boards.
- Maintain members' roster and update information on members.

C The Secretary shall:

- Take and retain minutes of the internal IFC meetings .
- Take and retain minutes of IFC meetings with the Warden.
- Coordinate all written and electronic communication between the IFC and Warden.

SECTION 4: MEMBERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

A. All members of the IFC shall attend the scheduled IFC meetings. If unable to attend a scheduled meeting, notice shall be provided to the Warden's Office and the IFC Chairperson 24 hours prior to the meeting whenever possible.

B. Work cooperatively and professionally with others on the IFC and institutional staff. Provide notice to the Chairperson and to the Warden when individual circumstances make a member ineligible or unable to continue service on the IFC.

C. Use the meetings between the IFC and the Warden to address the issues of wide application to inmates and their families and friends and refrain from discussing any issues unique to individuals.

ARTICLE V MEETINGS

SECTION 1: FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

The IFC and the Warden or Chief Deputy Warden shall hold a joint meeting no less than every sixty (60) days, unless mutually agreed upon by the institution and Council.

SECTION 2: AGENDA

The agenda shall be prepared by the Chair, with input from the Council and submitted to the Warden and Council members at least ten (10) business days prior to a scheduled meeting.

SECTION 3: QUORUM

A A quorum for election purposes is half plus one of the total current membership present

B. There is no quorum required for IFC meetings to proceed.

SECTION 4: TIME AND LOCATION

A The time and date of IFC meetings with institutional staff shall be determined by mutual agreement of the IFC members and the Warden.

B Whenever possible, meetings should take place on a regularly-scheduled visiting day.

C. If either the Chair of the IFC or the Warden is required to cancel a scheduled meeting, notification is to be given to the other party at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance, when possible.

SECTION 5: INSTITUTION REPRESENTATION

If the Warden or Chief Deputy Warden cannot attend the IFC meeting, the Chair shall be contacted and given the option of continuing or rescheduling the meeting. The approved IFC Meeting Minutes shall be distributed by the Warden to the Ombudsman and the Associate Director of the respective Mission. Other institutional staff will attend upon the direction of the Warden as needed per agenda items.

SECTION 6: GUESTS

With the Warden's prior approval, the IFC Chairperson may invite up to three guests to any regularly scheduled meeting.

**ARTICLE VI
IFC/INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATIONS**

SECTION 1 COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Each institution will provide a bulletin board for IFC to post official IFC communications (i.e. minutes, by-laws, vacancy notices, etc.) , All posted IFC notices shall be approved by the Warden's Office.
- B. Each institution shall provide the IFC a locked suggestion box in the visiting processing area.

**ARTICLE VII
AMENDING BY -LAWS**

By-Law changes cannot be made at the local institutional level Any requests for changes must be submitted to the Director, Division of Adult Institutions, CDCR.

*These By-Laws for California Prison Inmate Family Councils were approved on September 21, 2008, for immediate application in all prisons, by:
Suzan L. Hubbard, Director, Division of Adult Institutions..*