

## Hope on the Inside: Getting Started in Prison Ministry

C4SO seeks to be a diocese of Jesus followers who, for the sake of others, join God in the renewal of all things—our lives, communities and the world (Matthew 19:28).

*Correctional facilities like prisons, jails and youth rehabilitation centers are often hotbeds of religious activity, yet they commonly lack pathways for lasting change. The five core values that shape Hope on the Inside—KINGDOM, SPIRIT, FORMATION, MISSION, SACRAMENT—offer a supportive framework for transformation that we can joyfully pursue together with our brothers and sisters on the inside.*



This guide is designed to help answer your questions about caring for those who are incarcerated and to jumpstart the process for you!

- What are some ways I can support those who are incarcerated?
- What do I need to know to get started?
- How can I find a place to volunteer?
- What can I expect on the inside?

*"I was afraid to come to church. I didn't want to be reminded of how bad I am. The first time I took communion at Hope On the Inside was the first time I really felt like I could be forgiven for what I did. The first time you anointed me and called me 'Beloved' was*

*the first time anyone has ever called me that. I cried on my bunk that night.”*  
—Anonymous

## **WHAT ARE SOME WAYS I CAN SUPPORT THOSE WHO ARE INCARCERATED?**

The needs of individuals in correctional facilities are significant and worthy of our attention. Caring for incarcerated individuals is a comprehensive task that focuses on nurturing their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. It's all about fostering opportunities for rehabilitation and personal growth and giving them a second chance at life. Here are some general ideas to help kickstart the process.

*Feel free to email Lisa at [Lisa.Durr@c4so.org](mailto:Lisa.Durr@c4so.org) to explore how you can adapt them to your situation.*

### **1. Offer Religious and Spiritual Support.**

Providing access to spiritual guidance, religious services, and other forms of spiritual care can provide comfort and support to incarcerated individuals.

You may want to offer:

- One-on-one or group Bible study
- Friendship and discipleship
- A church service
- Bibles, Books of Common Prayer and other encouraging materials
- Faith-based programs that foster a sense of hope and personal transformation
- Weekly Eucharist
- Times of confession

### **2. Provide Mental Health Care and Emotional Support.**

Many incarcerated individuals suffer from mental health issues like depression, anxiety, PTSD or trauma. Providing access to professional counseling, psychiatric care and therapy is crucial to reintegration to their families and communities.

You may want to offer:

- Classes and programs that support mental health, well-being and emotional stability

*"I used to keep to myself. I was isolated because I didn't trust anyone. I stopped going to church, and that wasn't good for my mental health. I was anxious and paranoid. Now that I am back in church, my whole attitude has changed. I am upbeat and positive because I have hope! The team reminds us we are worth it." — QS*

### **3. Offer Educational and Vocational Training.**

Access to education programs, including high school diploma or GED programs, college courses and vocational training can help incarcerated individuals develop skills for their release, reduce recidivism rates and improve their reintegration into society.

Facilitators, Instructors, teachers and professors can participate in leading existing credit and non-credit courses, as well as certificate workshops, or even create new ones! While some courses need a teaching certification, the majority don't, allowing a lot of flexibility and creativity.

*"I have finally given my life to Jesus. I knew about Him. I had read the Bible; I didn't have time for Jesus...now I follow Jesus, I am stronger and more humble. I have asked God to use me according to His purposes and His will for my life. I don't look at my struggles and hardship as unfair. I look at it as God making me stronger and more fit." — RP*

### **4. Support and Participate in Rehabilitation Programs.**

Rehabilitation programs focusing on addiction recovery, anger management, and life skills training can help individuals address the underlying issues contributing to their incarceration. Providing inmates with the tools to make positive choices and adapt to society can reduce recidivism.

You might want to offer:

- Prayer Groups
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Celebrate Recovery
- Mindfulness and Relaxation

### **5. Promote Positive Relational Connections.**

You might want to offer:

- Visitation and friendship
- Letter-writing
- Phone visitation

## **6. Participate in Restorative Justice Programs**

Restorative justice emphasizes repairing harm and rehabilitating offenders by encouraging them to take responsibility for their actions. It includes the victim, the offender and the community in finding ways to make amends. These programs can help individuals develop empathy and gain insight into the impact of their actions.

You may want to offer:

- Victim Impact Workshops
- Forgiveness Classes

## **7. Participate in Programs That Ensure Fair and Transparent Legal Processes.**

Incarcerated individuals have a right to access to legal counsel and fair treatment during their time in prison.

You may want to offer:

- Volunteer legal services, support and guidance

## **8. Foster Restorative Work Programs**

Providing opportunities for meaningful work within the prison can help incarcerated individuals develop work ethics, skills and a sense of purpose. These programs can also contribute to the facility's operation and provide compensation to inmates, which can be used to support their families or for reintegration after release.

You may want to offer:

- Teaching skills that broaden job placement opportunities after release

*“Your team brings light into this dark place. You keep showing up when no one else in our lives shows up. They gave up on us a long time ago!” — JW*

## **WHAT DO I NEED TO GET STARTED?**

**Though each state has its own unique process, here's a general outline of what to expect:**

1. Visit the Department of Corrections website for your state.
2. Click on the volunteer tab found on the site.
3. Search for facilities near you, including prisons, jails and low-level correctional facilities.
4. Make note of the Eligibility Requirements for that institution.
5. Make note of any volunteer opportunities that interest you, such as religious services, education or mental health programs.
6. Fill out and submit the state volunteer application.
7. Sign the waivers for background check, and upload identification.
8. Provide references.
9. If you haven't heard back within two weeks, reach out to the Chaplain/Volunteer services coordinator for the facility you're interested in.

After finishing the application process, you can expect to go through two training levels:

1. Complete online courses.
2. Attend in-person onsite orientation, and receive your ID badge.

## **HOW CAN I FIND A PLACE TO VOLUNTEER?**

State websites can help you find a starting point and method. Examples for California, Texas and Tennessee are available here:

**California Department of Corrections**

**[Cdcr.ca.gov](http://Cdcr.ca.gov)**

### **Become a volunteer or program provider**

Becoming a Volunteer or Program Provider is a major part of the rehabilitative process for our inmates. Interested Individuals in volunteering and becoming Program Service Providers will need to coordinate with the Community Resources Managers at the

institutions. Becoming a Program Service Provider will require the following items and submitted to the Community Resources Manager at the institution you would like to partner with. To maintain consistency, please file all applications simultaneously.

### **1. Letter of Interest**

All new applicants that would like to be a Volunteer or Program Provider must submit a letter that provides justification of the services you are providing, how long you have been providing services, and where at. Additionally, this letter should include your employment, academic status, and participation in the community.

### **2. Application**

Please complete the **Volunteer and Program Service Provider Application**. The application includes the following documents:

CDCR Form 966 Volunteer Application and Service Agreement

CDCR Form 181 Primary Rules and Regulations

CDCR Form 894 Emergency Notification Information

CDCR Form 1049 Certification of Volunteer Participation

CDCR Form 8019 Nepotism and Fraternization Policy Acknowledgement

CDCR Form 2301 PREA Policy Information for Volunteers and Contractors

CDCR Form 1887 Parent Consent for Participation (Only if the applicant is under the age of 18)

CDCR Form 2037 Request for Volunteer Contact with Inmate

CDCR Form 894-A Personnel Identification Card Information

### **3. Training**

In accordance with the Department Operations Manual, Section 101090.7, Volunteer Orientation, at the onset of service and annually thereafter, regular and provisional volunteers must complete the volunteer training modules and on-the-job training courses listed below. The trainings to be completed annually can be found with the link below.

#### **Volunteer Training Website**

**[CDCR Volunteer Training\\_ext\\_s – Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#)**

If you currently do not have access to the Link above, please reach out to the Community Resource Managers to receive access.

#### **4. Video Modules**

- o Communicable Disease Prevention (Approximately 30 Minutes)
- o Inmate/Staff Relations (Approximately 30 Minutes)
- o Emergency Operations (Approximately 1 Hour)
- o Equal Employment Opportunity and Sexual Harassment Prevention (Approximately 45 Minutes)

#### **5. On-the-job Training Courses for Self-study**

- o Prison Rape Elimination Act (Approximately 1 Hour)
- o Information Practices Act (Approximately 1 Hour)
- o Fire Prevention and Life Safety (Approximately 30 Minutes)
- o Tuberculosis Testing Self-Education (Approximately 1 Hour)

#### **CALIFORNIA STATE PRISONS**

California Correctional Institution (CCI)	California State Prison, Sacramento (SAC)
California Health Care Facility, Stockton (CHCF)	California State Prison, Solano (SOL)
California Institution for Men (CIM)	Calipatria State Prison (CAL)
California Institution for Women (CIW)	Centinela State Prison (CEN)
California Men's Colony (CMC)	Central California Women's Facility (CCWF)
California Medical Facility (CMF)	Correctional Training Facility (CTF)
California Rehabilitation Center (CRC)	Folsom State Prison (FSP)
California State Prison, Corcoran (COR)	High Desert State Prison (HDSP)
California State Prison, Los Angeles County (LAC)	Ironwood State Prison (ISP)
	Kern Valley State Prison (KVSP)
	Mule Creek State Prison (MCSP)
	North Kern State Prison (NKSP)

Pelican Bay State Prison (PBSP)

Sierra Conservation Center (SCC)

Pleasant Valley State Prison (PVSP)

Substance Abuse Treatment Facility  
and State Prison, Corcoran  
(SATF-CSP)

R.J. Donovan Correctional Facility  
(RJD)

Valley State Prison (VSP)

Salinas Valley State Prison (SVSP)

San Quentin Rehabilitation Center  
(SQRC)

## **TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE CHAPLAINCY AND VOLUNTEER SERVICE**

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice places a significant focus on volunteer services, realizing volunteers are an essential element in the rehabilitation and re-entry of inmates into the community. Volunteers assist in providing literacy and educational assistance, life skills, job skills, and parenting classes. Volunteers facilitate medical education and prevention training as well as arts and crafts programs, drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, faith-based programming, and other programs determined by TDCJ to aid in the transition between confinement and society. The following areas provide volunteer services directly to inmates:

- Rehabilitation Programs Division (Chaplaincy Department, Substance Use Treatment Program, and Sex Offender Program)
- Reentry and Integration Division
- Correctional Institutions Division
- Private Facility Contract Monitoring/Oversight Division
- Parole Division
- Victim Services Division
- Health Services
- Windham School District

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

For specific questions or assistance please email the Volunteer Services Department directly at [VolunteerServicesLiaison@tdcj.texas.gov](mailto:VolunteerServicesLiaison@tdcj.texas.gov).



The role of the volunteer within TDCJ is to provide guidance in specific activities and programs, promote personal growth and development, provide support and assistance to victims and inmates, and help facilitate re-entry into the community.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, you are encouraged to complete the online application and training (see below). After the completion of initial training, volunteers are required to renew their volunteer application and re-train every two (2) years.

- Apply: use the online application.
- Train: either online or in-person.

Check your status. Approval status will only be reflected if the training has been completed within the last 24 months. Please allow time for processing.

Completion of training is not a guarantee of approval. All applications include a criminal background check and are reviewed for eligibility according to the following criteria:

- Must be 18 years or older.
- Must not have any pending criminal charges.
- Must have been released from an adult prison for at least 12 months.
- If you are on any type of adult supervision, you will be required to provide a letter from your supervising officer acknowledging your participation in the TDCJ Volunteer Program and that you are meeting the requirements of supervision.
- Must be 12-months from the disposition date of any criminal charge (excluding traffic tickets).

If you have a specific question, please contact Volunteer Services at (936) 437-3026 .

### **Texas Department of Corrections**

[tdcj.texas.gov](http://tdcj.texas.gov)

#### Region I

Bell Unit (Cleveland)  
Byrd Unit (Huntsville)  
Diboll Correctional Center (Diboll)  
Duncan Unit (Diboll)  
Ellis Unit (Huntsville area)  
Estelle Unit (Huntsville area)  
Ferguson Unit (Midway)  
Goodman Unit (Jasper)

Goree Unit (Huntsville)  
Holliday Unit (Huntsville)  
**Huntsville Unit Texas State Penitentiary**  
Lewis Unit (Woodville)  
Polunsky Unit (Livingston)  
Wainwright Unit (Lovelady)  
Wynne Unit (Huntsville)

### Region II

Beto Unit (Palestine Area)  
Boyd Unit (Teague)  
Coffield Unit (Palestine area)  
Cole State Jail (Bonham)  
Estes Unit (Venus)  
Gurney Unit (Palestine)  
Hodge DDP Unit (Rusk)  
Hutchins State Jail (Dallas)  
Johnston SAFPF (Winnsboro)  
Michael Unit (Palestine area)  
Moore, C. Unit (Bonham)  
Powledge Unit (Palestine)  
Skyview Psychiatric Unit (Rusk)  
Telford Unit (New Boston)

### Region III

Clemens Unit (Brazoria)  
Gist State Jail (Beaumont)  
Henley State Jail (Dayton/Female)  
Hightower Unit (Dayton)  
Hospital Galveston  
(Accredited by Joint Commission on  
Accreditation of Health Care)  
Jester III Unit (Richmond)  
LeBlanc Unit (Beaumont)  
Lechner State Jail (Humble)  
Memorial Unit (Rosharon)  
Plane State Jail (Dayton/Female)  
Ramsey Unit (Rosharon)  
Scott Unit (Richmond)  
Stiles Unit (Beaumont)  
Stringfellow Unit (Rosharon)  
Terrell Unit (Rosharon)  
Young Medical Facility (Dickinson)  
Vance Unit (Richmond)

### Region IV

Briscoe Unit (Dilley)  
Connally Unit (Kenedy)  
Cotulla Unit  
Dominguez State Jail  
(San Antonio)  
Fort Stockton Unit

Garza East Unit (Beeville)  
Garza West Unit (Beeville)  
Glossbrenner SAFPF (San Diego)  
Lopez State Jail (Edinburg)  
Lynaugh Unit (Fort Stockton)  
McConnell Unit (Beeville)  
Ney Unit (Hondo)  
Sanchez State Jail (El Paso)  
Segovia Unit (Edinburg)  
Stevenson Unit (Cuero)  
Torres Unit (Hondo)

### Region V

Allred Unit (Wichita Falls Area)  
Baten ISF (Pampa)  
Clements Unit (Amarillo)  
Dalhart Unit  
Daniel Unit (Snyder)  
Formby State Jail (Plainview)  
Jordan Unit (Pampa)  
Mechler Unit (Tulia)  
Montford Psychiatric Unit (Lubbock)  
Roach Unit (Childress)  
Smith Unit (Lamesa)  
Wallace Unit (Colorado City)  
Western Regional Medical  
Facility-Montford (Lubbock)  
Wheeler State Jail (Plainview)

### Region VI

Bartlett (Bartlett)  
Crain Unit (Gatesville/Female)  
Halbert SAFPF (Burnet/Female)  
Hamilton Unit (Bryan)  
Havins Unit (Brownwood)  
Hilltop Unit (Gatesville/Female)  
Hobby Unit (Marlin/Female)  
Hughes Unit (Gatesville)  
Luther Unit (Navasota)  
Marlin Unit  
Middleton Unit (Abilene)  
Murray Unit (Gatesville/Female)  
O'Daniel Unit (Gatesville/Female)  
Pack Unit (Navasota)  
Robertson Unit (Abilene)  
San Saba Unit

Sayle SAFPF (Breckenridge)  
Travis Co. State Jail (Austin)  
Woodman State Jail -  
(Gatesville/Female)

**Private Facilities**

Bradshaw (Henderson)

Bridgeport (Bridgeport)  
Coleman Unit (Lockhart)  
Kyle (Kyle)  
Moore, B. (Overton)  
Lindsey (Jacksboro)  
Willacy County (Raymondville)

**Tennessee Department of Corrections**

Volunteers play a critical role in reducing recidivism and improving the outcomes of offenders. TDOC offers volunteer opportunities inside all 10 of our facilities, as well as in the community at our seven Day Reporting Centers located across the state. TDOC volunteers assist staff in facilitating programs and services and are integrated into every phase of the rehabilitative process. Whether a volunteer provides mentorship, coaching, faith-based or spiritual guidance, music, or art, their dedication instills hope and creates positive change.

Ninety-five percent of people in prison will one day be released to our communities, and while a successful return to society is largely based on the effort of the offender and their desire to change, the public also plays an important role in the reentry process. TDOC volunteers are active participants in increasing public safety, helping others, and building a stronger Tennessee. They are essential to fulfilling our mission and we are grateful for their dedication, selflessness, and service to our agency.



Are you interested in becoming a volunteer, but would first like to learn more about the Department? [Watch some of our videos and sign up for Citizens' Correctional Academy when the next sessions become available. We also have additional videos available on our YouTube.](#)

If you are ready to sign up, the next step is to complete an online volunteer application. By using the secure link provided below, you will be able to submit your application. Carefully complete the ENTIRE application. Remember that references will be contacted, and a criminal background check will be required. Once your information has been submitted, you will be contacted.

First-time applicants must complete the [Volunteer Application](#). You do not need to submit an application if you are applying for recertification.

We appreciate your desire to volunteer with the Tennessee Department of Correction Religious and Volunteer Services. If you have submitted an application, it is currently being processed. If you have any questions, please contact at [Volunteer.Services@tn.gov](mailto:Volunteer.Services@tn.gov).

### **East Tennessee Region**

Correctional Administrator Bradley Trate

[Bledsoe County Correctional Complex](#) (formerly Southeastern Tennessee Regional Correctional Facility) - (Bledsoe County) Pikeville

[Morgan County Correctional Complex](#) - (Morgan County) Wartburg

[Northeast Correctional Complex](#) - (Johnson County) Mountain City

### **Middle Tennessee Region**

Correctional Administrator Jason Clendenion

[Debra K. Johnson Rehabilitation Center](#) (formerly Tennessee Prison for Women) - (Davidson County) Nashville

[Lois M. DeBerry Special Needs Facility](#) - (Davidson County) Nashville

[Riverbend Maximum Security Institution](#) - (Davidson County) Nashville

[Turney Center Industrial Complex](#) - (Hickman County) Site 1 - Only; (Wayne County) Annex - Clifton

### **West Tennessee Region**

Correctional Administrator Joe Henger

[Mark Luttrell Transition Center](#) - (Shelby County) Memphis

[Northwest Correctional Complex](#) - (Lake County) Tiptonville

[West Tennessee State Penitentiary](#) - (Lauderdale County) Henning

[Women's Therapeutic Residential Center](#) - (Lauderdale County) Henning

## **WHAT CAN I EXPECT INSIDE?**

Your safety will be the top priority for the administration and staff at your volunteer location. Following your training and the facility procedures is your responsibility; they will handle everything else!

Generally, volunteers are appreciated and treated with respect. While there are some rare exceptions, you will likely find staff willing to support you as you find your way. Don't be afraid to ask questions as you learn the procedures.

You will experience a level of warmth and appreciation from insiders that is both sincere and generous.

This work, like all our efforts for "the least of these"—the hungry, thirsty, sick, weary, displaced and imprisoned—necessitates prayer, faith in God and support.

That's what Hope on the Inside is!

Let us know how we can help you!

The Rev. Lisa Durr, RN MACM

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Executive Director of HOPE ON THE INSIDE