



May 9, 2023

## **DOJ OIG Releases Survey Results of Inmate Perceptions of the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Management of the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz announced today the results of a survey of federal inmates on their perceptions of the Federal Bureau of Prisons' (BOP) management of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. This survey, which was the DOJ Office of the Inspector General's (OIG) first-ever survey of inmates confined within federal prisons, was distributed to more than 126,000 inmates housed at 122 BOP institutions in March 2021. Over 25,500 inmates responded to provide their perspectives on the measures that the BOP took to try to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic, and on the effect that those measures had on inmates' experiences inside BOP institutions.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented significant challenges to the BOP in its efforts to mitigate the spread of the disease, safeguard the health and safety of its staff and inmates, and maintain core operations. Although inmates' views collected through this survey are perceptions that do not necessarily reflect the BOP's official procedures or all the circumstances surrounding its response to the pandemic, the survey results offer firsthand insights on inmate experiences from inside BOP institutions.

The results of the survey include:

- Many inmates reported they had less access to communal areas and resources during the lockdowns that the BOP implemented to control the spread of COVID-19. In many instances, steps that the BOP took to prevent the spread of COVID-19 increased the amount of time that inmates were confined to their cells or housing units.
  - Inmates reported that medical and mental health care they received worsened during the lockdowns that the BOP implemented in the first year of the pandemic. By April 2021, inmates reported that medical and mental health care had begun to improve, but 61 percent of inmates still rated medical care as "poor," and 63 percent rated the mental health care as "poor."
  - Inmates reported that the availability of cleaning supplies and institution sanitation worsened during lockdowns that the BOP implemented to try to contain COVID-19; however, responses indicated that these areas improved in April 2021 to such a degree that they were better than pre-pandemic levels.
  - Approximately 54 percent of inmates responded that the information they received from the BOP about how to protect themselves from COVID-19 infection was either "poor" or that they did not receive any information at all. In comparison, only 15 percent of inmates reported that the information the BOP provided to them was "good."
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**Survey Results:** To view the survey results with graphics, as well as a Data Appendix that contains our complete survey results in greater detail, please visit: <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/inmate-perceptions-federal-bureau-prisons-management-coronavirus-disease-2019-pandemic>

**Additional Information:** For further information from the OIG on BOP's response to the pandemic, including issues we identified through remote inspections of 16 facilities housing BOP inmates during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, our identification of challenges that the BOP will likely continue to face during and after the pandemic, and actions that the BOP should undertake to prepare for future public health emergencies, see DOJ OIG's [Capstone Review of the BOP's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

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