



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION
Juvenile Rehabilitation

14TH & Jefferson ~ PO Box 45720 • Olympia WA • 98504-5720

November 27, 2018

Interim Directive

TO: All Juvenile Rehabilitation Employees
FROM: Marybeth Queral, Assistant Secretary
SUBJECT: Access to Religious Services for Youth in Juvenile Rehabilitation Facilities

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 27, 2018

ACCESS TO RELIGIOUS SERVICES: All Juvenile Rehabilitation counselors, counselor assistants, security officers, managers and administrators in institutions and community facilities will make reasonable efforts to provide youth with access to religious services, ceremonies, sacraments, and events. This access may be limited if the requested religious activity presents an imminent safety or security concern and limiting a youth's access is the least restrictive way to ensure the safety and security of JR facilities.

Additional information:

Youth explicitly have a constitutionally protected right to believe, express, and exercise the religion of their choice while incarcerated. The U.S. Constitution First Amendment's Free Exercise Clause and the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) establish these rights.

Many people find meaning, comfort, hope, goodness and connections to family and community through their religious practice, beliefs and/or community of faith. For youth in our care, we must promote this ability to access religious services without limiting them by levels or behavior unless they pose an imminent safety or security concern. Participation in religious activities is more likely to promote better behavior than it is to perpetuate negative ones. Each youth is an individual who needs us to meet them where they are at – including with their spiritual needs.

For Native American youth, religious exercise includes access to sweat lodge, regular smudging, and personal religious items and participation in powwow. With this in mind, JR will ensure that all of our three institutions have and maintain a sweat lodge in concert with local Tribal consultants and provide sweats twice a month.

Next steps:

We will be developing a formal standalone religious services policy that replaces this interim directive. Our current policy on religious practices is found in JR Policy 4.20, Supporting Youth Wellness, and states, "Youth will be provided with appropriate resources and opportunities to participate in the religious requirements of their faith". This directive provides additional clarity until we have the new policy.

All questions about youth accessing religious services and materials should be directed your management teams while we work on the development of the religious services policy. You may send written questions or concerns to Art Garza, JR Business Tribal Liaison. These questions will help inform our policy development.

As always, I appreciate your willingness to work hard to support youth rehabilitation and successful reentry to the community.

Thank you!