



PRISON INFORMATION PROJECT  
prison.info.project@umich.edu

c/o Prof. Margo Schlanger  
910 Legal Research Building  
625 South State Street  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1215

February 13, 2014

FOIA Coordinator  
West Virginia Department of Corrections  
1409 Greenbrier Street, Charleston, WV 25311  
(304) 558-2036

**Re: Request Related to Prisoner Grievances and Prisoner Correspondence**

Dear FOIA Coordinator:

We are University of Michigan Law School students conducting a research project (the Prison Information Project) on prisoner grievance and correspondence/publication procedures throughout state prison systems. As part of our project, we are requesting public records from various state departments of corrections. Our request is made under the West Virginia Freedom of Information Act, W. Va. Code § 29B-1-1 *et seq.*

The goal of our project is to increase public awareness and enhance the public interest through the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information regarding prisoner grievance procedures and correspondence/publication guidelines. To that end, the Prison Information Project requests the following documents:

Records Requested

1. Any current prisoner handbook or manual (including any inmate orientation handbook or manual), system-wide or institution-specific.
2. All current prisoner grievance regulations, policies, guidelines, manuals, directives, rules, etc., including general grievance policies/guidelines/etc. and specific grievance policies/guidelines/etc. relating to, for example, health care or sexual assault.
  - If the attached document is the only and most current and complete policy, please indicate as such. If this is the case, there is no need to send a duplicate policy.

- By "**grievance**," we mean any grievance or complaint, whether formal or informal, whatever the subject matter.
3. Any record, created or updated from 2003 to the present, tallying or reporting:
    - The number of grievances filed and resolved each year.
    - The categories or subject matter of grievances filed and resolved, and number of grievances in each subject matter category used (for instance, grievances related to food, health care, use of force, etc., and including both ordinary and "sensitive" complaints such as those involving allegations of staff misconduct)
    - Grievance outcomes or resolutions each year, by subject matter category and year.
    - Statistics or data on length of time to resolve grievances, by subject matter category and year.
      - We are not requesting individual grievance records. We are only requesting records that summarize, aggregate, or compile grievance data.
  4. Any current policy for prisoner mail or correspondence, including regular and legal mail, prisoner receipt of newspapers, magazines, newsletters, and books.
    - If the attached document is the only and most current and complete policy, please indicate as such. If this is the case, there is no need to send a duplicate policy.

Our preferred form for public records is digital copies (such as Word files or PDFs), sent as email attachments or via fax. However, if records are only available in paper form, or if transferring to a digital form would incur a cost, please let us know.

The Prison Information Project requests a response to these requests within five business days. Should you determine that any of the information requested is exempt from disclosure, please provide us with a notification citing the legal authorities on which you rely.

We anticipate that the records we are requesting are readily available and will not require excessive staff time or resources. Because we are conducting this research on behalf of a public university and intend to use the information for educational purposes we are requesting a fee waiver. If you believe the fee waiver does not apply, please notify us before processing this request.

Yours,



Anelisa Benavides  
Prison Information Project  
University of Michigan Law School