

# ACCESS TO LEGAL HELP FOR INCARCERATED PEOPLE

*A MARKET RESEARCH STUDY DESIGNED FOR*

## MONTANA INNOCENCE PROJECT

ADVANCED MARKETING RESEARCH  
MSBA, UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### *RESEARCH OBJECTIVES*

Our team worked with the Montana Innocence Project (MTIP), a group that works to free the innocent and unjustly incarcerated through advocacy and pro bono legal services. The Montana Innocence Project wanted insight into how incarcerated people hear about legal services, such as MTIP and parole. MTIP also wanted to know what motivates and detracts incarcerated people from accessing these services. MTIP was interested in knowing if people knew how to apply for their services, and how those who have interacted with their organization rate their services. Other questions of interest were what challenges did inmates face when seeking services like MTIP, and how does their relationships with case managers and corrections officers affect their ability to ask for help.

### *METHODS*

To address these questions, our team and MTIP coordinated with the Montana Women's Prison in Billings, MT to visit the prison to administer paper surveys to inmates. Our goal for the sample size goal was 40 participants, however in actuality we had 18 people complete the survey. Since our sample was too limited for hypothesis testing, descriptive statistics were used in the analysis and were reported instead.

### *KEY FINDINGS*

There is a normal distribution for age, 22% were in the age category 26-35, while 22% were in the age category 36-45, and another 22% were in the 55-65 age category. 61% percent of the participants identified as white. One of the issues we wanted to highlight with this study is the disproportionate number of Indigenous women in the Montana prison system. 11% percent of our respondents identified as American Indian; however, we must take into account that indigenous women make up less than 1% of the national population. Another key finding was that 45% of the participants were incarcerated for homicide/attempted homicide. Comparatively, the national average is between 4-5%. A finding we want to highlight is that many participants disagreed that they have enough money to pay for legal help. When it came to feelings about the justice system, many participants felt that they were just another number in the system, and many disagreed that the justice system is fair. 94% of respondents did indicate that they corresponded with family at least once a week. When answering questions about information source type, 30% of respondents receive information from TV/radio and 26% from an outside person. 56% of participants said they currently do not have legal help, those with legal services indicated moderate satisfaction with their experience. 83% of respondents indicated they had heard of MTIP, and 26% of the participants said they heard of the program through another inmate. Many participants indicated that they are not familiar with MTIP and most would like to learn more.

### *RECOMMENDATIONS*

Our recommendations for the Montana Innocence Project are to conduct further outreach on social media, to family members, within the prison system, and to utilize a wide range of media sources such as podcasts and tv and radio programs to advertise.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Montana Innocence Project (MTIP) is an organization that advocates for criminal justice system reform and to free the innocent and unjustly incarcerated in the state of Montana. To do so, the MTIP provides pro bono legal representation to those clients that qualify. Initially, MTIP sought research from The University of Montana College of Business to collect more data on the disproportionate number of indigenous persons, more specifically, indigenous women, currently incarcerated in Montana and how to make the information about their services more accessible to this population. However, this objective was broadened to include all demographics of the entire women's prison population and assist in providing information as to how the organization can expand their services to incarcerated persons with unjust and/or excessive sentences. Initial interviews were conducted with two current MTIP clients and our survey and focus group were conducted at the Montana Women's Prison in Billings, Montana.

## **SECONDARY RESEARCH/LITERATURE REVIEW**

Our overall secondary research suggests the need for increased public awareness, funding, and general resources to improve the efficiency of exonerating people from prison and jail systems in the state of Montana as well as across the United States. Core issues attributed to wrongfully incarcerated people and a slow exoneration process include the loss of credibility, culture, tax dollars, and most importantly, years of people's lives. For example, studies estimate that between 4-6% of people incarcerated in US prisons are actually innocent (Gilbert, 2022) where in 2021, exonerees lost a total of 1,849 years to wrongful imprisonment for crimes they did not commit (University of Michigan, 2022). Organizations dedicated to helping secure exonerations of wrongfully convicted defendants are called Innocence Organizations (IOs; University of Michigan, 2022). These professional exonerators-along with Conviction Integrity Units (CIUs)-played crucial roles in the exonerations of those wrongfully convicted where IOs and CIUs were jointly responsible for 97 exonerations in 2021 (University of Michigan, 2022).

One such Innocence Organization is The Innocence Project. While imperative to the exoneration of those wrongfully convicted, this organization operates almost entirely off donor revenue (Innocence Project, 2022). Per the 2022 Innocence Project Annual Report (Innocence Project, 2022), 97% of \$42,048,816 received in annual revenue was from donations, all of which expanded the organization's social work team and increased assistance to more than 20 freed clients and their families. Local Innocence Network affiliates such as the Montana Innocence Project also rely on donations, where annual donations in 2021 of \$428,233 went to expanding outreach, education, and advocacy (Montana Innocence Project, 2021). Comparatively, the U.S. government spends an estimated total of \$80.7 billion on public prisons and jails (Prison Policy Initiative, 2022).

An important aspect of why these organizations exist and need to be properly funded is due to the disproportionate imprisonment of certain racial and ethnic groups. Racial disparities

among the US incarcerated population are prevalent, where Black Americans are incarcerated in state prisons at nearly 5 times the rate of white Americans and Latinx/e Americans are incarcerated at 1.3 times the rate of white Americans (Nellis, 2021). In jails, Native people had more than double the incarceration rate of white people, and in prisons this disparity was even greater (Wang, 2021).

Further examination of the racial disparities in the Montana correctional system was the motivation behind this study. While Black Americans are also disproportionately imprisoned in the state of Montana, for example, it is estimated that 1 in 44 Black Montanans are incarcerated (Nellis, 2021), the primary focus of our target population was Indigenous peoples, in particular Native women. Nationwide, Indigenous women make up less than 1% of the population, but comprise 2.5% of those held in prisons and jails (Montana Innocence Project, 2022). The proportion of native peoples in relation to the total population incarcerated in Montana prisons is 5.1 times higher than whites (Vera Institute of Justice, 2019) where the total offender population in Montana for FY 2021 was 79% white, 18% Native American or Alaskan Native, 2% African American and 1% Pacific Islander. (Montana Department of Corrections, 2021). However, where Native Americans make up 6.6% of the total population of Montana (Census, 2020), Indigenous women make up 40%, or 87 of 217 persons of the reported institutionalized population in the Montana Women's Prison in Yellowstone County, Montana (Prisoners of the Census, 2020).

Data suggests that the disproportionate representation of Native Americans in the Montana prison system can be attributed to social, political, economic and historical factors (Kuipers, 2011) or simply for violating their probation or parole conditions (Mehta, 2018). A July 2022 study published by the Council of State Governments Justice Center found that American Indian people on probation are 1.44 times more likely to have supervision revoked than white people (Bastomski, 2022). Meeting the supervisory conditions is next to impossible for Indigenous people in Montana as the lack of basic services, affordable housing, and addiction treatment centers on and near tribal lands, discrimination from police and probation officers, the vast spread of Montana's geography and the inability to pay for these travel expenses out of pocket can all contribute to these folks returning to prison (Mehta, 2018).

Further issues specifically impact women, such as being disproportionately detained in local jails (Selby, 2022) most likely because incarcerated women have lower incomes than incarcerated men and have a difficult time affording money for bail (Kajstura, 2019). Women also face additional consequences relative to the added weight of childcare. On average, married or partnered women tend to be in charge of childcare responsibilities more than men (Zamarro, 2021) and according to the latest Census data, 80% of single parents are single mothers whereas only 20% are single fathers (Real Diapers, 2022). While the most common offense for men and women in Montana was 'criminal possession of dangerous drugs,' women are more likely to be charged with 'criminal child endangerment' whereas men are more likely to be charged with more violent crimes, including partner/family member assault (Montana DOC, 2021). Nationally, about 28% of female exonerees were convicted of crimes in which the victim was a child and just over 70% of women exonerated in the last 30 years were convicted

of crimes that never took place (Selby, 2022). This includes Montana Innocence Project client Jasmine Eskew, who was wrongfully incarcerated for the death of her daughter, Brooklynn. More than 60% of women in prison are mothers and 80% in jail are mothers with children under the age of 18 (Innocence Project, 2022). And the economic impact of women who are mothers isn't just the cost associated with incarceration which in FY 2021 were \$116.17/day at the Montana Women's Prison (Montana DOC, 2021). It extends to government assistance for dependents of incarcerated women as well as for formerly incarcerated women who experience extremely high rates of food insecurity, unemployment, and homelessness (Sawyer, 2022).

## FLOWCHART OF RESEARCH PROCESS

The flowchart below represents our process to acquire and analyze our research.



Figure 1: Flowchart of Research Process

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following seven research questions were developed to address managerial concerns. Below is a comprehensive list along with an explanation of each question's purpose:

### **RQ1: How do incarcerated persons hear about any legal services available?**

This research question was meant to address how incarcerated persons receive their information. This could be information regarding legal matters such as sentencing review or parole, information about MTIP or other relative organizations, and how they receive their general information, news, and/or correspondence from others. This question also looked to address how often an incarcerated person is in contact with their family members and/or friends.

### **RQ2: What motivates/detracts these people to reach out to legal services like the Montana Innocence Project for assistance?**

This question was meant to gauge what types of motivators and detractors keep people from seeking legal or other assistance. Motivations such as a strong social network, a belief in personal empowerment, or that they can be helped as opposed to detractors such as lack of funding, not knowing where to ask, or the feeling of being helpless.

**RQ3: Are incarcerated persons aware of the process of applying for legal assistance with organizations like MTIP?**

This research question was designed to explore if incarcerated persons are aware of how to apply for legal assistance, but also how many currently have legal assistance from organizations or non-government appointed legal counsel (private attorney).

**RQ4: If an incarcerated person has interacted with the organization, how satisfied are they with their information and/or services?**

This question looked at the overall satisfaction of those that have received legal assistance from an organization or non-government appointed legal counsel. This was to get an idea if other services had easy application systems, open communication, and made the incarcerated person feel as though they were respected and being cared for.

**RQ5: What challenges or hurdles do incarcerated persons face when getting information about legal services like MTIP?**

This question sought to find what types of challenges incarcerated persons face when trying to get information. Hurdles such as how many times a person had been previously arrested, reason for incarceration, evidence against them, or where (county, state) their arrest took place.

**RQ6: How do their relationships with case managers and employees at the prison affect their willingness to ask for help?**

In this question, we sought to find out more about the relationship dynamic between incarcerated persons and those in positions of power within the correctional system. This would help us to better understand an incarcerated person's overall feelings toward the justice system as well as if there were any teaching or training opportunities for prison staff or legal professionals. Further, we wanted to confirm secondary research surrounding fear of retaliation and if incarcerated persons didn't reach out for any form of assistance due to thinking it might result in negative repercussions.

**RQ7: To what extent are incarcerated persons aware of the services available?**

This question seeks to find if the incarcerated person believes they can be helped and their overall knowledge of their situation and how MTIP could help them. We also hope to find what types of resources or knowledge the respondent had surrounding the organization or general legal services and how to reach out.

## PERSONAL INTERVIEW SUMMARY

We had the opportunity to interview two current MTIP clients, Katie Garding and Joseph Jefferson-Dust, and our survey respondents in a focus group setting. In addition to our secondary research, to prepare for these interviews, we studied several cases on the Montana Innocence Project website, including those of Richard Burkhart, Richard Raugust, and Jasmine Eskew. Below are our findings summarized according to each research question. Full interview transcripts can be referenced in Appendix, Section A5.

### *RQ1 How do incarcerated persons hear about any legal services available?*

- a. Incarcerated people most often hear of resources from those friends and family members that aren't currently incarcerated. Sometimes, someone such as a case manager or attorney will provide further assistance and information, but often public defenders are too overworked to provide adequate counsel or other tailored services.
- b. Some information is provided by being posted throughout the prison, either by the phone or on bulletin boards near the prison entrance or the MWP Prison Paws program.
- c. Podcasts are an effective way to relay information.
- d. Corrections staff are of little to no assistance.

### *RQ2: What motivates/detracts an incarcerated person to reach out to legal services like the MTIP for assistance?*

- a. Afraid of seeking help because of retaliation both inside and outside of prison
- b. Also, they are fearful and unsure of what lies ahead after they get out (assisted living, reassimilation, job placement, parole oversight, etc.)
- c. Those incarcerated persons who are receiving medical treatment are the most fearful of seeking help and often are not forthcoming of information or do not tell the truth when pressed. This is due to the possibility of retribution in the form of undermining or outright denying treatment.

### *RQ3: Are incarcerated persons aware of the process of applying for legal assistance with organizations like MTIP?*

- a. A lot of incarcerated persons are aware of the appeals process and basic resources, but are not familiar with the Montana Innocence Project, its process/application, nor organizations like it
- b. Might be familiar with organizations like the ACLU or VA assistance, but not with Disability Rights Montana, Equal Justice Initiative, or Centurion Ministries

### *RQ4: If an incarcerated person has interacted with the organization, how satisfied are they with their information and/or services?*

- a. Overall positive feedback about interactions with MTIP and happy to have worked with the organization
- b. MTIP helps to provide emotional support and made clients more hopeful for a positive outcome

- c. MTIP also helps prepare for parole, which many might not make the first time due to lack of preparation

*RQ5: What challenges or hurdles do incarcerated persons face when getting information about legal services like MTIP?*

- a. Not well known as many expressed not knowing of organization prior to conviction or even arrest.
- b. Correctional facilities staff either don't know of the organization or are unwilling to provide information about it. System in general does not provide much guidance or information, either.
- c. If you don't have relationships with people that aren't incarcerated, it is hard to access information
- d. Non-white prisoners may be more discouraged from seeking assistance as they tend to be incarcerated for longer in a system where the majority of authoritative personnel were white.
- e. People are also fearful of what will happen when they get out
- f. Mail is often the only medium to receive pertinent information and it is often lost

*RQ6: How do their relationships with case managers and employees at the prison affect their willingness to ask for help?*

- a. A poor relationship with staff can actually keep them from receiving information or seeking it out in fear of retaliation.
- b. Relationship can be dependent on a number of factors, such as: more experienced staff tend to be more empathetic. Female staff in men's prisons are less empathetic than male counterparts, and jails tend to have a more casual environment allowing for more relaxed staff/inmate interactions.
- c. If you are respectful as an inmate, staff will reciprocate.
- d. Most of the time, staff do not provide any helpful or relevant information

*RQ7: To what extent are incarcerated persons aware of the services available?*

- a. Most don't know what MTIP can do for them, even if they have heard of the organization
- b. There is more information about bail bonds than legal services.
- c. Mandated classes and library resources are severely outdated
- d. Provided tablets do not give information on services available when they could

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Target population*

Entire population of the Montana Women's Prison in Billings, MT

### *Sampling method and procedure*

Flyers were posted in the prison approximately a month before the survey visit, inviting inmates to fill out a survey for the MT Innocence project. The surveys were created and distributed by University of Montana MSBA students in the visitor's room to a total of 18 inmates. We expected to have between 40 and 50 respondents attending. The students made initial personal introductions followed by a brief explanation of the purpose of the visit, survey and instructions on how to complete the survey. The survey took approximately 10 minutes for the group to complete, few respondents had any difficulties/questions with filling out the survey. Students gathered the surveys before proceeding to circle into a discussion group where the inmates could share their stories and give further insight into daily life at the prison as well as suggestions on how information can reach them more effectively.

When running descriptive statistics on the survey responses, no data was removed in our analysis.

## **DESCRIPTION OF SURVEY RESPONSES**

### *DEMOGRAPHICS*

#### **Age**

Out of a total of 18 respondents, 11% identified as being in the 18-25 range, 22% in the 26-35 range, another 22% in the 36-45 range, 17% in the 46-55 range, 22% in the 56-65 range and only 6% over the age of 65. Figure 2 below shows the distribution of age for the 18 respondents and how it's evenly distributed.

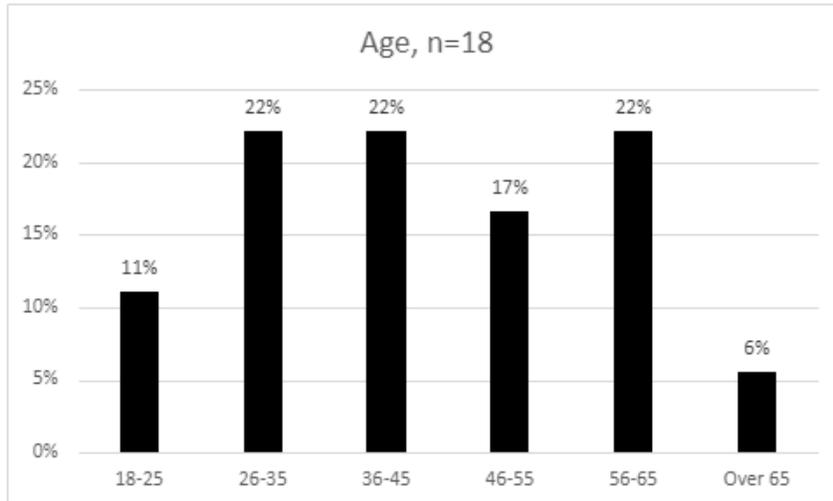


Figure 2: Age Chart

### Race/Ethnicity

Out of the 18 respondents, 61% identified as white, while 11% identified as American Indian, 6% as Hispanic/Latino, 6% as Jewish and 17% Identified as more than one race. Figure 3 shows that the majority in our sample size were white but it also shows more proportional diversity in non-white races than the state of Montana's population as a whole.

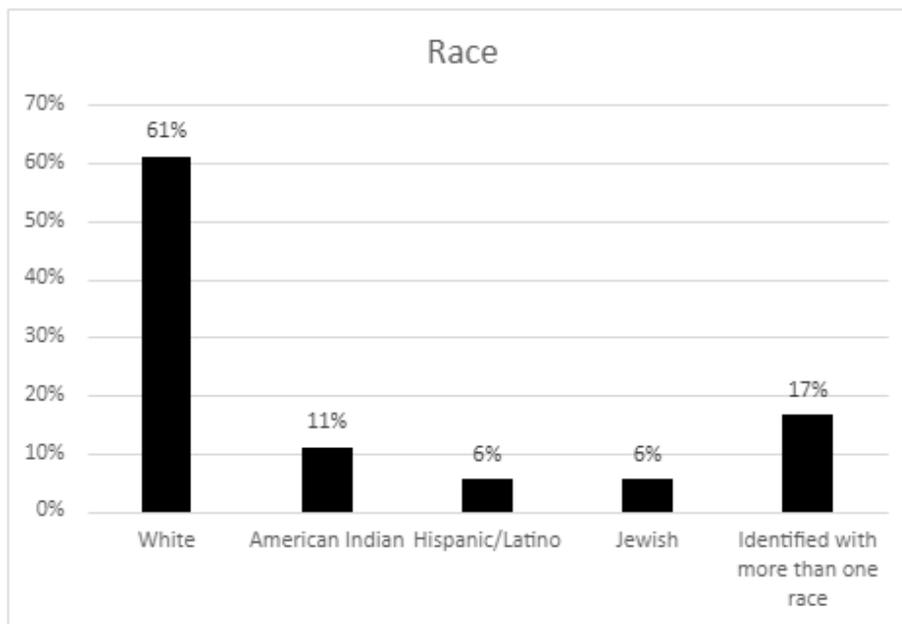


Figure 3: Race/Ethnicity Chart

## Education

Out of the 18 respondents, 22% answered that they had at least some high school education or their GED, while 6% said they had a trade school education, 17% had some college education, but no degree, 17% had their associate degree, and as many as 28% had a college degree of a Bachelor or more. 11% checked more than one option. We expected the amount of college degree earners to be less than 28% in our population but this number is a close representation of the national average.

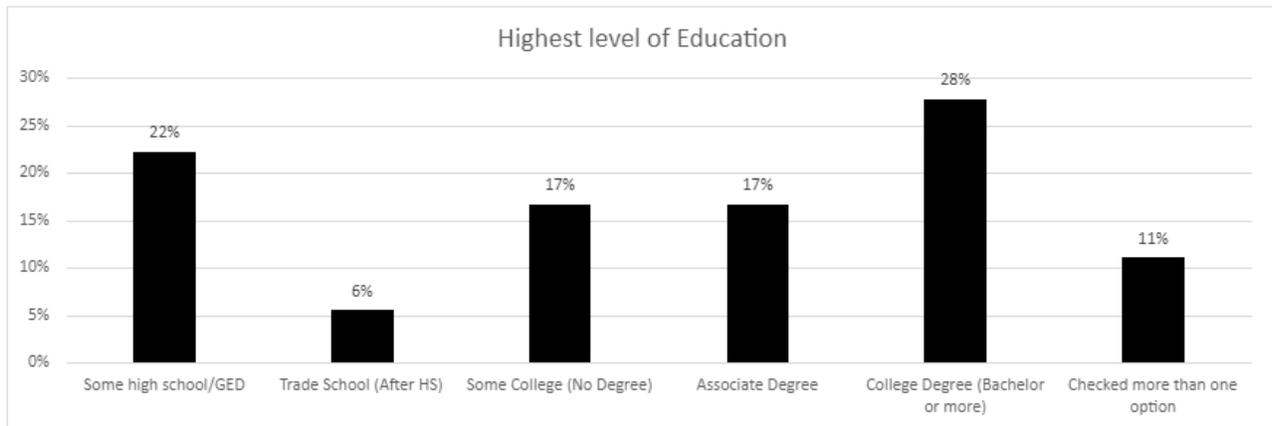


Figure 4:: Education Level Chart

## COMMUNICATION SOURCES

Figures 5, 6, and 7 most related to RQ1: *How do incarcerated persons hear about any legal services available?* A key takeaway for MTIP is that family and TV/Radio are the best ways to present information to inmate (Figure 5). Further, 40% of our respondents receive information from at least two places (Figure 6), in addition 94% of respondents correspond with a family member at least once a week (Figure 7), so spreading information via family members and TV/Radio could allow MTIP the greatest potential in acquiring new clients.

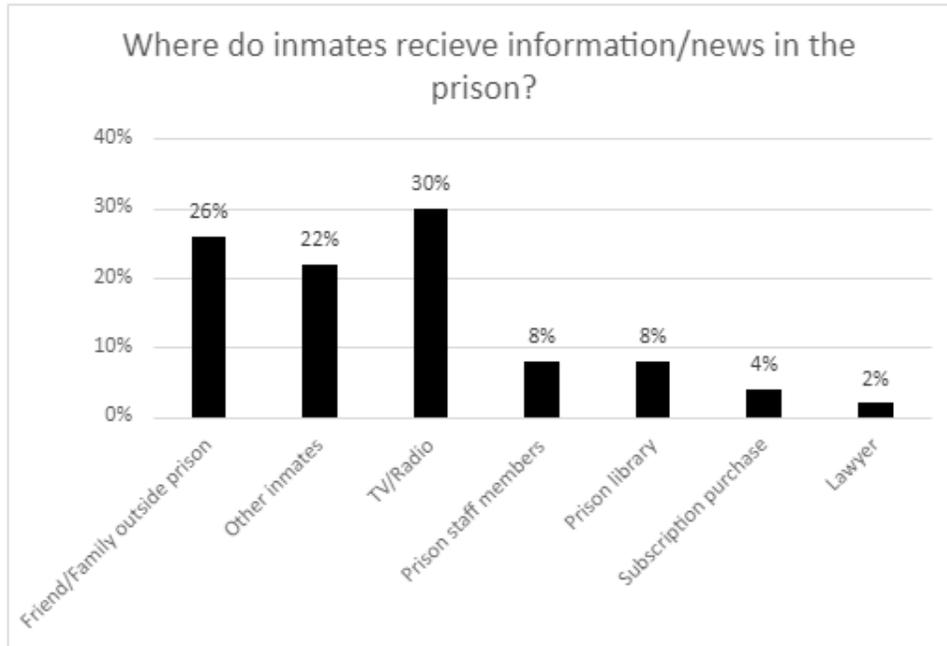


Figure 5: How Information is Received Chart

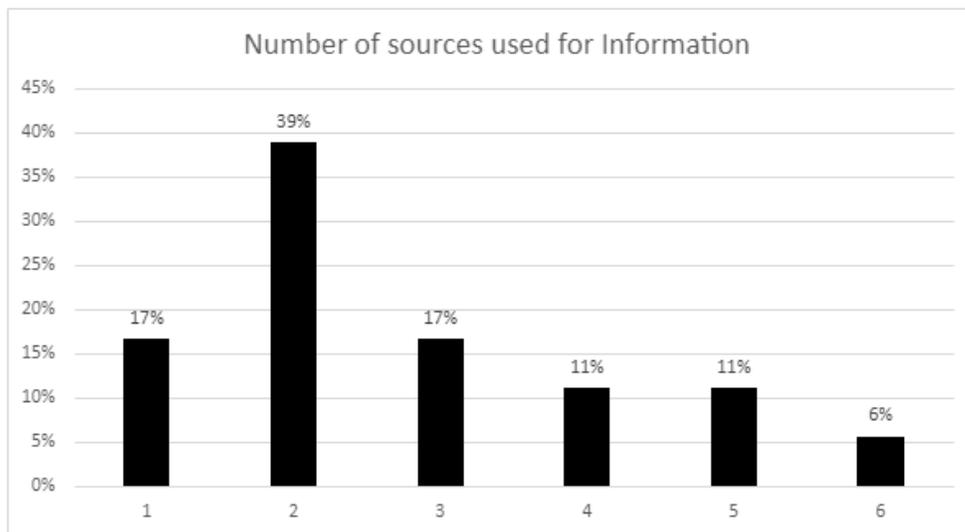


Figure 6: Number of Info Sources Chart

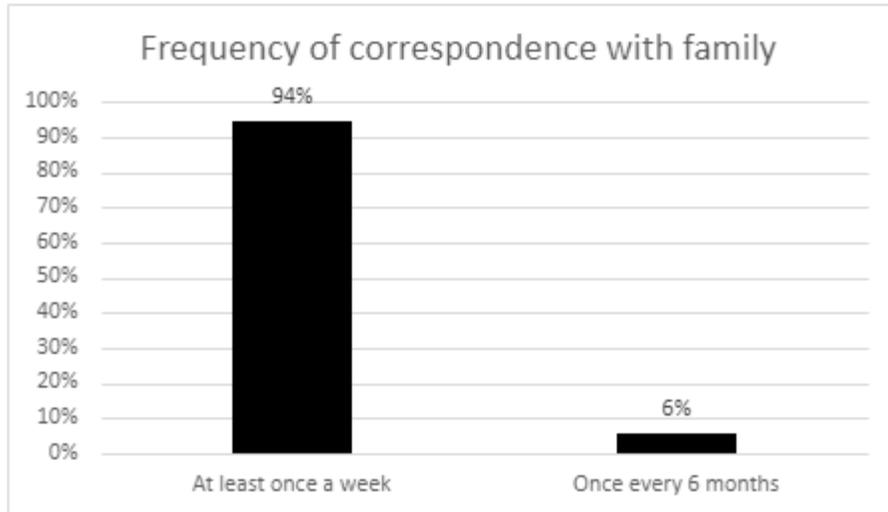


Figure 7: Number of Info Sources Chart

**CURRENT LEGAL ASSISTANCE**

Figure 8 most relates to RQ3: *Are incarcerated persons aware of the process of applying for legal assistance with organizations like MTIP?* Figure 8 shows that over half our sample (56%) does not have any form of current legal assistance, 17% have a private attorney and 28% have assistance from another organization.

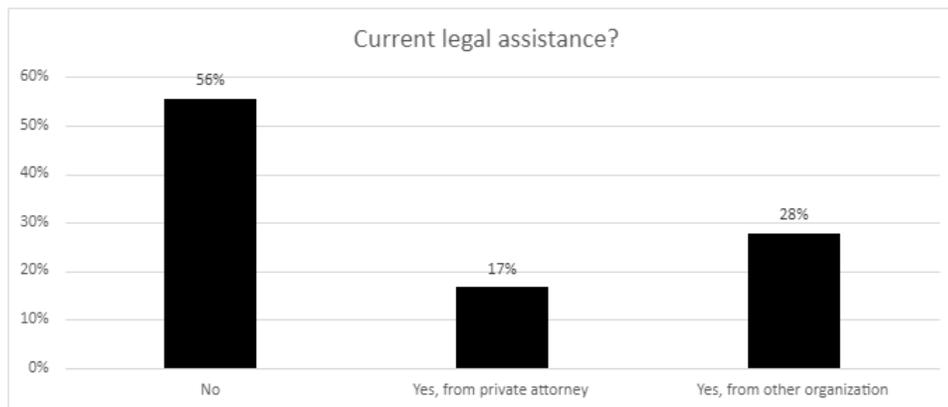


Figure 8: Current Legal Assistance Chart

**SATISFACTION WITH LEGAL ASSISTANCE**

Figure 9 most relates to RQ4: *If an incarcerated person has interacted with the organization, how satisfied are they with their information and/or services?* When asked about their opinions

on their current legal services, no one had any overwhelming positive or negative feelings towards services provided, which is a good opportunity for MTIP to improve the overall legal experience.

This question only had 11 responses because if they responded 'no' to having current legal assistance they were instructed to skip this question.



Figure 9: Satisfaction with Legal Assistance Chart

### INCARCERATION AND CONVICTION

Figures 10, 11, and 12 most relate to RQ5: *What challenges or hurdles do incarcerated persons face when getting information about legal services like MTIP?* We expected more of an even distribution between crimes and found the high homicide number interesting (Figure 10). The high number of homicides could be something to investigate for MTIP when considering legal services and council. According to BOP.gov, nationally, most people are incarcerated for drug charges. We also found that the average current sentence for non-life sentence respondents was 25 years. This coincides with the most common reason for incarceration (45%, Figure 10) was homicide or attempted homicide, which typically carry longer sentences. This was followed by 14% of respondents convicted for drug-related offenses, 14% for assault, and 14% for 'other,' where 9% were convicted of theft-related offenses and another 5% for trafficking.

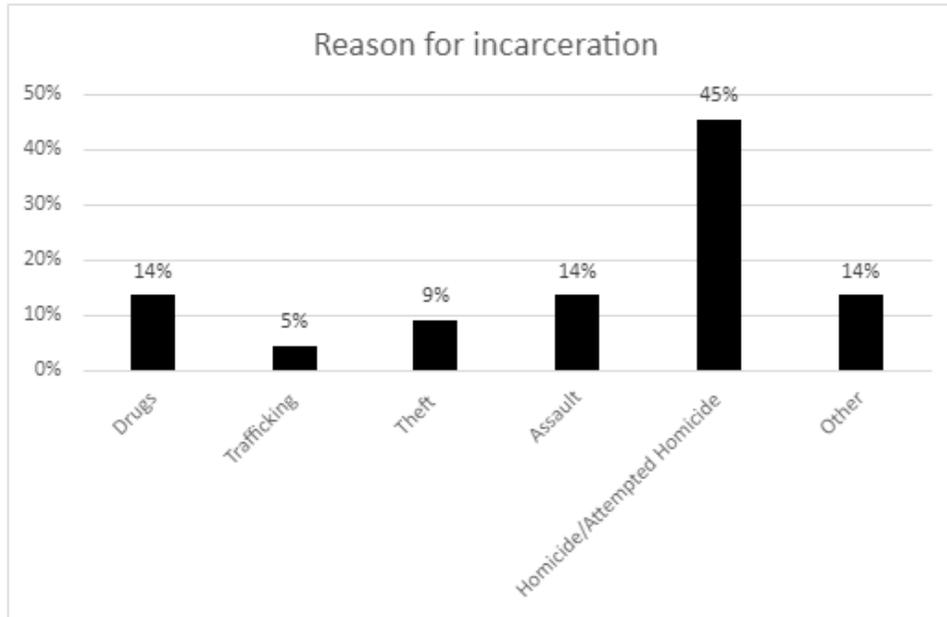


Figure 10: Reason for Incarceration Chart

In Figure 11, we look at evidence that led to conviction. Respondents had at least one piece of evidence that led to their conviction with a few respondents having as many as three. The largest category was 'other, which included phone calls, video, absconding the crime and failing to surrender themselves to custody. This was followed by 31% of respondents being convicted from a testimony, 15% from a confession, 12% from forensic evidence, and 8% from an eyewitness. For future surveys, more variety in categories should be considered to reduce the "other" category.

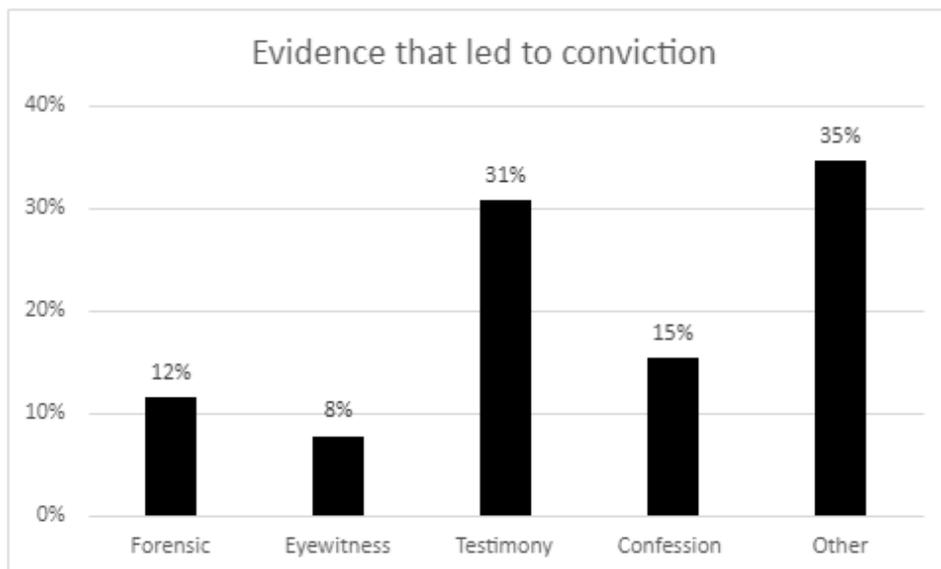


Figure 11: Evidence That Led to Conviction Chart

In figure 12, we examined which respondents were previously arrested. This was one of our most evenly split responses in the entire survey and could be a good starting point for future segmentation and analysis. We found that people with prior arrests were more prone to multiple convictions, which aligned with our secondary research. Originally, we wanted to run tests to find correlation to overall sentence term, but didn't have enough respondents. So, if there is an opportunity to have a larger sample size in the future, we would definitely ask this question again.

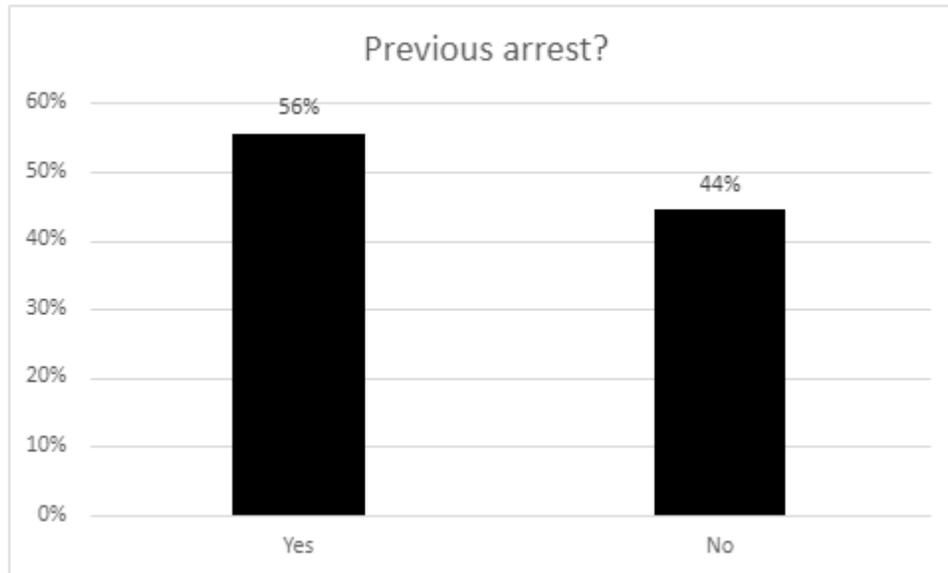


Figure 12: Previous Arrest Chart

### *FEELINGS ABOUT THE JUSTICE SYSTEM*

Figures 13 and 14 most depict RQ6: *How do their relationships with case managers and employees at the prison affect their willingness to ask for help?* When asked about feelings and beliefs around the legal system, respondents clearly report a dire need for improvement in the system (Figure 13) They believe the system is unfair, that they are being segregated and that correctional staff members are not helpful. While the chart showing how prison members hear about the prison system (Figure 14) can also align with a number of other research questions, it relays imperative information of how incarcerated persons most hear about MTIP from other inmates, family members, or MTIP informational sessions and how little prison staff members and attorneys actually do to relay information or offer help to those inmates in need.

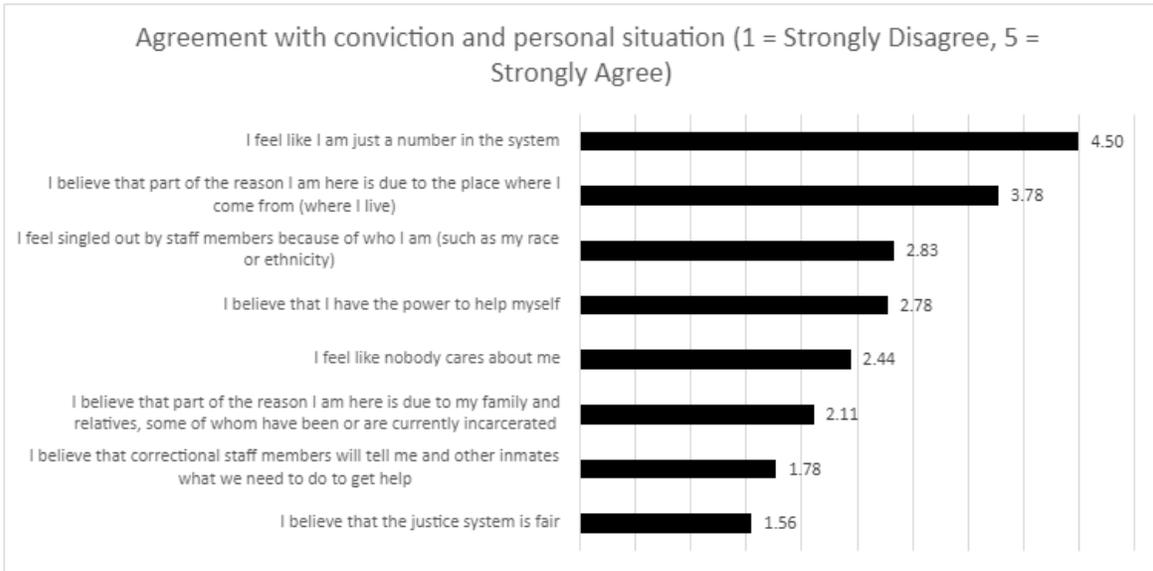


Figure 13: Agreement with Conviction and Personal Situation Chart

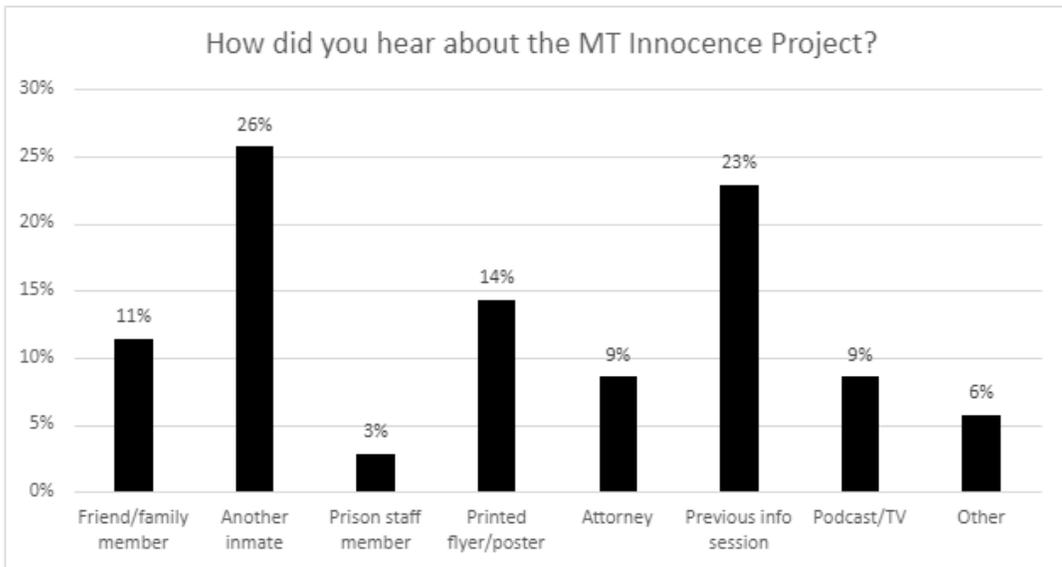


Figure 14: How Incarcerated Persons Hear About MTIP Chart

## FEELINGS ABOUT CONVICTION



Figure 15: Feelings About Conviction Chart

Figure 15 most relates to RQ7: *To what extent are incarcerated persons aware of the services available?* The statements above show that half of our sample believe that they are innocent and that they can prove it. Money also seems to be an issue contributing to less legal expertise and to a higher wrongful conviction rate. Overall, they believe they need help, but don't have the resources or knowledge around where to reach out.

## MTIP TARGETING

Figure 16 asks of awareness of MTIP. 83% of respondents stated that they had heard about the MTIP before. Most people said that they had heard about it from another inmate or from a previous info session. This chart yet again tells us that they can't rely on prison staff members for information. This question touched on several research questions including RQ1, RQ3, and RQ7.

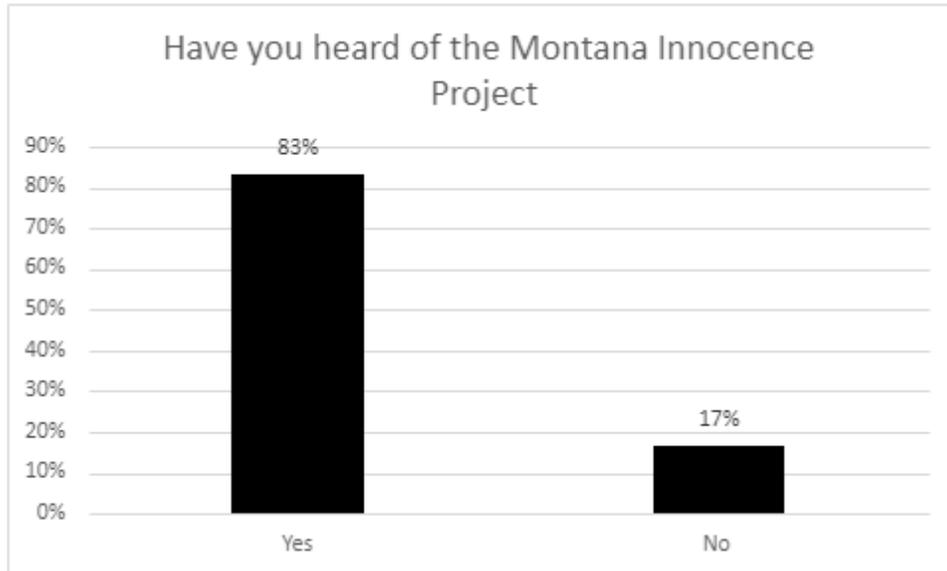


Figure 16: Awareness of MTIP Chart

Figures 17 and 18 show that there is an overwhelming amount who want to learn more about the organization, the application process and how they can help. Contrary to our hypothesis, other inmates do not prevent them from seeking help from MTIP. They seem more concerned about not knowing enough about MTIP and how to apply. We believe these charts related to RQ2, RQ3, and RQ5.

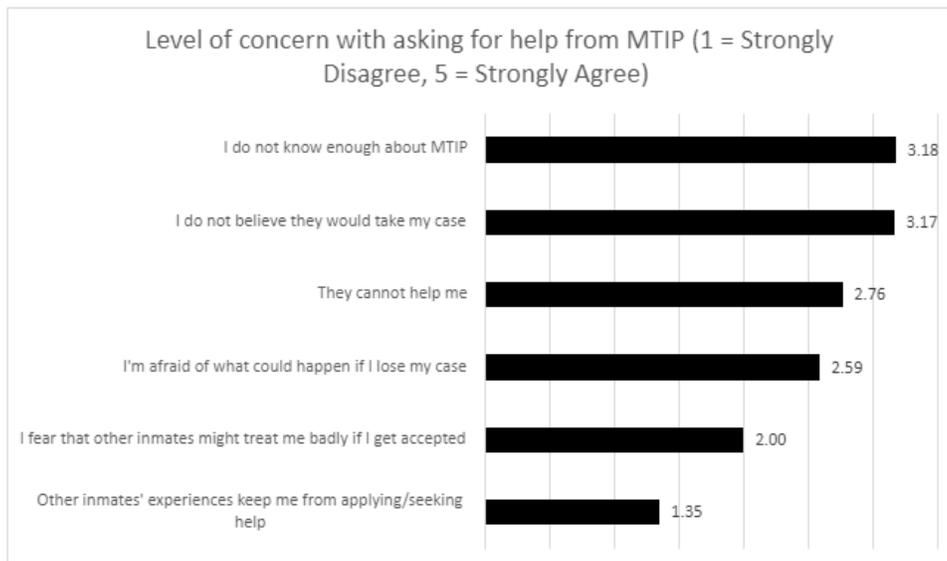


Figure 17: Level of Concern with Asking for Help from MTIP Chart

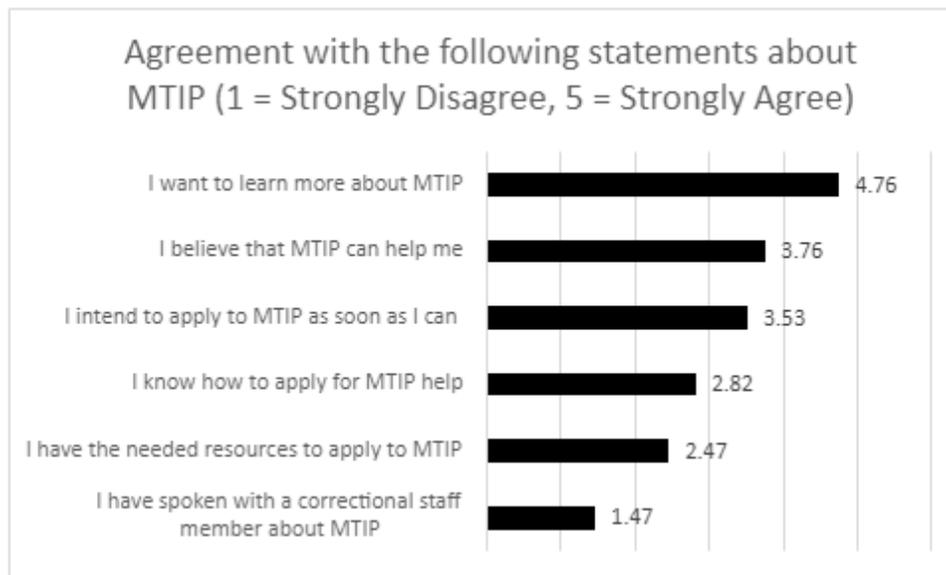


Figure 18: MTIP Knowledge Chart

## CONCLUSION

### *Study Limitations*

Initially, we had requested to also survey the men’s prison in Deer Lodge, Montana. However, we were denied that request and were only permitted access to the women’s facility in Billings. Upon confirmation of our visit to the Montana Women’s Prison, the team was notified that we would have a sizable sample of inmates to survey, then it dwindled to 44 people, and ultimately, only 18 women completed the final survey out of a total incarcerated population of around 220. Many notified our team that they were fearful of retaliation for participating in the focus group or an activity relative to the Innocence Project and the only reason many came at all was because it was a survey. The focus group session was not recorded, but there was an armed officer present at all times, which, while understandable for safety reasons, it is possible that it kept women from speaking up that may have had otherwise. In addition, there was an Indigenous ceremony taking place simultaneously, which could have detracted a lot of women from survey or focus group participation.

### *Recommendations*

From our research, we think MTIP can make services more accessible by organizing informational sessions at prisons and jails or collaborating with other organizations on such events. If it at all possible, we also think it can make an impact to include organization

information in prison orientation. However, we are aware of the limitations that surround this suggestion. There was a strong desire from respondents to have a contact form or other relative information available on the tablet system or EDOVO network. Further, it would be important to focus on different types of outreach to the community, especially friends and family of those whom are incarcerated. Developing a stronger social media presence, making appearances on podcasts, developing e-mail marketing campaigns or quarterly newsletters with resource lists could all be avenues in which to do this. Finally, most incarcerated persons fear retaliation from people in positions of power and therefore, are fearful for asking for assistance. By broadening the scope of legal services offered, MTIP can make those individuals feel less intimidated to seek assistance or apply for organization services.

# APPENDICES

## A1. Questionnaire



### Study on Access to Legal Help for Incarcerated People



Please participate in this **completely anonymous** study conducted by students at The University of Montana on behalf of the Montana Innocence Project (MTIP). While your participation in this study will not guarantee that you will receive MTIP services, it will help us create a better legal help program. Please try and answer all the questions below but know that *you can choose to not answer* questions if you do not want to.

---

Q1. In total, how long have you been incarcerated? (write in numbers)

Years \_\_\_\_\_ Months \_\_\_\_\_

Q2. In total, how long have you been incarcerated at the Montana Women’s Prison? (write in numbers)

Years \_\_\_\_\_ Months \_\_\_\_\_

Q3. How long is your current sentence? (write in numbers)

Years \_\_\_\_\_ Months \_\_\_\_\_

Q4. Have you ever gone before the Montana Board of Pardons and Parole, and if so, how many times?

1. No, never    2. Yes, once    3. Yes, two or three times    4. Yes, four or more times

Q5. Have you requested a sentencing review, and if so, how many times?

1. No, never    2. Yes, once    3. Yes, two or three times    4. Yes, four or more times

Q6: Have you had any parole or probation violations?

1. No            2. Yes, due to the following reasons (check every correct box):
- a.  I’ve had minor technical violations
  - b.  I’ve had a violation due to family or personal circumstances beyond my control
  - c.  I’ve had violations because the terms of my parole or probation were difficult to meet and I did not have proper support

Q7. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Circle a number for each row	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I believe I am innocent	1	2	3	4	5
b. I believe I will be able to prove my innocence	1	2	3	4	5
c. I know where I can find legal help for my case	1	2	3	4	5
d. I have friends and family who can help me	1	2	3	4	5
e. I have enough money to pay for legal help	1	2	3	4	5
f. I expect to be eligible for parole	1	2	3	4	5
g. I expect to serve my entire sentence	1	2	3	4	5

Q8. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your conviction and personal situation:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I believe that the justice system is fair	1	2	3	4	5
b. I believe that I have the power to help myself	1	2	3	4	5
c. I believe that correctional staff members will tell me and other inmates what we need to do to get help	1	2	3	4	5
d. I feel singled out by correctional staff members because of who I am (such as my race or ethnicity)	1	2	3	4	5
e. I feel like nobody cares about me	1	2	3	4	5
f. I feel like I am just a number in the system	1	2	3	4	5
g. I believe that part of the reason I am here is due to the place where I come from (where I live)	1	2	3	4	5
h. I believe that part of the reason I am here is due to my family and relatives, some of whom have been or are currently incarcerated	1	2	3	4	5

Q9. What is the primary reason for which you are incarcerated now? Circle the closest answer that fits:

1. Drugs                      2. Trafficking                      3. Fraud                      4. Theft  
5. Arson                      6. Assault                      7. Homicide                      8. Other \_\_\_\_\_

Q10. What was the evidence against you? Check every correct box:

- a.  Forensic    b.  Eyewitness    c.  Testimony    d.  Confession    e.  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Q11. Where did you get arrested? State \_\_\_\_\_ City/County \_\_\_\_\_

Q12. Have you been arrested before in your life?

1. No                      2. Yes. If so, how many times? \_\_\_\_\_

Q13: How often do you receive correspondence and/or communicate with friends and family?

1. Not at all                      2. Once a year                      3. Once every 6 months  
4. Once a month                      5. At least once a week

Q14. Where or how do you receive information/news? Check every correct box:

- a.  Friend or family from outside prison    b.  Other inmates    c.  TV/Radio  
d.  Prison staff members    e.  Prison library    f.  Subscription purchase  
g.  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Q15. Do you have legal assistance NOW?

1. No
2. Yes, from a private attorney
3. Yes from an organization which is: (write name) \_\_\_\_\_

Q16. If so, what is your experience with the legal services provided by the <u>attorney</u> or <u>organization</u> you are currently using? (if you answered 1 above skip this)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. It was easy to apply for their services	1	2	3	4	5
b. It was easy to get hold of them	1	2	3	4	5
c. They are friendly and make me comfortable	1	2	3	4	5
d. They respect and care about me	1	2	3	4	5
e. They know my case well	1	2	3	4	5
f. Their services are helping my case	1	2	3	4	5

Q17. Have you heard of The Montana Innocence Project before today?

1. No
2. Yes, I have heard about them from:
  - a.  Friend or family member
  - b.  another inmate
  - c.  prison staff member
  - d.  printed flyer or poster
  - e.  attorney
  - f.  previous info session
  - g.  podcast/TV
  - h.  other \_\_\_\_\_

Q18. What concerns do you have about asking for help from the Montana Innocence Project (MTIP)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I do not know enough about MTIP	1	2	3	4	5
b. I do not believe they would take my case	1	2	3	4	5
c. I'm afraid of what could happen if I lose my case	1	2	3	4	5
d. They cannot help me	1	2	3	4	5
e. I fear that other inmates might treat me badly if I get accepted	1	2	3	4	5
f. Other inmates' experiences keep me from applying or seeking help	1	2	3	4	5

Q19. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Montana Innocence Project (MTIP)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I know how to apply for MTIP help	1	2	3	4	5
b. I have the needed resources to apply to MTIP	1	2	3	4	5
c. I have spoken with a correctional staff member about MTIP	1	2	3	4	5
d. I believe that MTIP can help me	1	2	3	4	5
e. I want to learn more about MTIP	1	2	3	4	5
f. I intend to apply to MTIP as soon as I can	1	2	3	4	5

**Classification Questions: Helps us get to know who you are**

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Q20. How old are you now?

1. Under 18 years    2. 18-25 years    3. 26-35 years    4. 36-45 years  
 5. 46-55 years    6. 56-65 years    7. Over 65 years

Q21. How many dependents do you have?

1. None  
 2. I have minor children depending on me. If so, how many \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. I have elderly or disabled family members depending on me. If so, how many \_\_\_\_\_

Q22. What ethnic and racial categories do you identify with? Check all boxes that fit you:

- a.  White                      b.  African American/Black    c.  Asian American  
 d.  American Indian    e.  Alaskan Native                      f.  Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander  
 g.  Hispanic/Latino    h.  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Q23. What is the highest level of education you have completed

1. Less than grade 9                      2. Some high school/GED                      3. Trade school (after high school)  
 4. Some college (no degree)    5. Associate degree                      6. College degree (bachelor) or more

Q24. Have you ever experienced homelessness?

1. No    2. Yes.

Q25. Are you a veteran?    1. No    2. Yes

Q26. Do you have a certified disability?    1. No    2. Yes

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION! PLEASE RETURN QUESTIONNAIRE TO RESEARCHERS**

## **A2. Personal interview Transcripts**

*Interview with Katie Garding, 9/20/22*

### **Interview Background:**

*Our group was able to conduct an interview with [Katie Garding](#), a current client of the Montana Innocence Project . Garding, who was falsely charged with vehicular manslaughter in April of 2010 and found guilty in 2013, began working with MTIP in 2012 and was granted parole in December of 2021 after consistent avocation.*

*Note: This interview was not recorded on audio/video, and while it does not include verbatim transcription, it was inscribed in real time by several team members*

### **Were you familiar with the Montana Innocence Project at all before you started working with them?**

'I didn't know who the Innocence Project was when I got into trouble. Jen Streano [my case manager] was associated with someone within the innocence project. If it wasn't for her, I would have had no idea that this organization existed. After she introduced us, I got involved.'

### **Can you tell us more about your experience, as in why you needed their help and experience working with the organization?**

'They asked what I was convicted of and why I needed their help, then they took the wheel from there and have done a lot of the work from there.

### **Do a lot of incarcerated persons know about The Innocence Project?**

'The Innocence Project isn't brought up at all, most of your information is posted on the wall next to the phone. Unless you have a friend or someone on the outside to help you, in pods or jails, or case managers in prisons [that know] about what the Innocence Project is and what they do.

### **Would you say there are professionals within the system that are willing to help?**

'My case manager was willing to help, but [she] didn't know about it either. [It] could backfire because people might take advantage of that. [It] goes back to training and education, most people working in the judicial system think that most people who are there committed a crime and [the importance of] bringing awareness [especially since] the officers hadn't heard of it, either. Most of them wanted to work with [the organization].

### **What was your timeline like? As in, how long did it take for this process to take place?**

'I filed an appeal with the state of Montana, but [they were] not a part of that, so you need an appellate lawyer first. Two years just for that. They have been on my case since 2011/2012 and are still working on it.'

**Would you say that a lot of incarcerated persons are aware of the appeal process?**

'Yes, the appeal information is readily available, more so than the Innocence Project.'

**Do you think that there are any incarcerated folks who are afraid of seeking help?**

'Yes, they may be afraid of seeking help because of retaliation within the prison, then they are stuck there or retaliation or consequences on the outside.'

**What was your experience working with the staff?**

'When I was first incarcerated, we didn't talk about crimes or anything like that, so staff didn't know my story, except my case manager who would set up calls with attorneys. [It] depends on your case manager, too. If they are good, you could set up meetings with lawyers very quickly. No one knew about me until I was on a tv show, then the staff were more willing to help with the things I needed. If I needed to prepare for parole, basic questions they may be asking me, they are willing to help me. I didn't know how willing they would be to help me with things, and that's why my experience was different. Only because of a tv show. When Randi would call and set up interviews, they would be really accommodating over Zoom with attorneys, there was never any issue. If in jail, the system, you either get out or go to prison. Jail system is way worse than what prison system is, if you talk with a case manager, you have to be the one to initiate.'

**Did they not clarify with you or give you enough information?**

'If not for my lawyer, I would have not gotten enough resources to get out. And TV definitely helped out.'

**Are you happy with your interaction with the Innocence Project?**

'I'm partial toward them so I love everything that they have done, but they have done everything they could have for me.'

**How do you think we can bring more awareness to the prison population about this organization?**

'If not for lawyers, when you go through the prison population you have orientation about prison rules, but it would be more beneficial to have these resources available to you.'

**What are some of the benefits that this organization provided to you?**

'More emotional support, [it] gives hope to get out, I wouldn't have gotten parole on my first time, [so] it made my stay a little easier.'

**Are officers permitted to speak with you?**

'There's a fine line between officer and inmate relationships, officers take advantage of inmates and other ones that take advantage of officers, some treat you like people but could there be more training and then have more boundaries at the same time, the girls would be more in person. Once you are in prison, then that identity is taken from you.'

**Were there more male or female officers in the Billings facility?**

'There were a fair mix of both.'

**Would you say that there were certain officers that had more empathy than others?**

'Officers that had been there longer had more empathy, younger ones were straight out of training and they have certain rules to follow, and they are taught that the inmates are the enemy and need to be treated that way, but the longtime officers understand that they are people and that they just made a mistake.'

**Does the Montana Innocence Project help with reassimilation/job placement?**

'No they haven't.'

**What were your concerns for getting out?**

When I first got out, I was in assisted living to get back on your feet. I was ready to just be done, but that was really beneficial. I could do a six month program there before getting a real job. I was worried, then when you go through the program it's very stressful.

**Interview Background:**

*Our group was able to conduct an interview with [Joseph Jefferson-Dust](#), a current client of the Montana Innocence Project. Jefferson-Dust, was falsely accused and charged with sexual assault of a minor in 2015. Fearful of losing at trial and facing 100 years in prison, Joe pleaded no contest to Criminal Endangerment and was sentenced to ten years of probation, all suspended, on March 28, 2017. In 2020, the minor recanted the accusation entirely, citing that she made it up because her father claimed Native men are dangerous.*

*Note: This interview was not recorded on audio/video, and while it does not include verbatim transcription, it was inscribed in real time by several team members*

**Mr. Dust, well, do you go by Joseph or Joe?**

'Joe is fine, I have unlimited time'

**Were you familiar with the Montana Innocence Project at all before you started working with them?**

'I very briefly had heard about it and I was not looking for it, heard about it on a podcast, didn't know it was state specific'

**If so, for how long?**

'Summer of 2020, listening to a podcast at work in concrete, lawyers were on the podcast talking about it. Trying to help a guy get exonerated, wondered if it could happen to me Joe Rogan Experience.'

*Randi Maddox, an MTIP staff member, mentions that a man from that podcast liked Joe's pictures on the MTIP Instagram page*

**Have you ever heard of organizations such as the ACLU, Disability Rights Montana, Equal Justice Initiative, Centurion Ministries?**

'Aware of ACLU, but didn't know if they helped with exonerations'

**If you hadn't been aware of the MTIP, what other resources had you heard of/ would you have reached out to?**

'Veterans assistance, ask if you want a representative'

**Can you expand on that? Your experience with the VA?**

'Part of intake process, interview they do, correctional officer does it, are you a veteran, ask if you want a representative.'

**What would that representative do from the VA?**

'They come in and ask if I need any specific help with anything. How the VA could help, do you need help with mental health, specific health issues, if you need help with meds, didn't ask anything about case, but when he went to the VA, counselor suggested for mental health and the doctor asked if he was wrongfully convicted of a felony, then they would undermine treatment, could report to your corrections officer.'

**Were you fearful of giving truthful information to the doctor for fear of retribution?**

'I definitely was, I was afraid of being revoked from treatment and that I was being disingenuous with the treatment.'

**Can you tell us more about your experience, as in your story and your experience working with the organization?**

'Same with the doctor, I was afraid of going back to jail and didn't want to be honest.'

**How often did you speak with family, friends, significant others while incarcerated.**

'I would call mom two-to-three times a week [and] called a cousin once.'

**Was that an easy process to do that?**

'It wasn't too bad, they give you a number and you put it in to call.'

**Were you arrested prior to this conviction?**

'I wasn't arrested at all'

**Would you say that a lot of incarcerated persons are aware of what resources are available to them after conviction and the appeal process is over?**

'I would say yes, as far as the basic stuff that we have. Not the Innocence Project, I don't know why that is. There are only so many things you can talk about so you say, 'I'm getting help from this group of lawyers,' then another incarcerated person will ask them to expand. Give it a try, I thought it was a long shot.'

**Do you think the majority of incarcerated folks are afraid of seeking help?**

'I don't think so, they just didn't know. People the same as me, offenders who their treatment dependent are most fearful.'

**Did you have any concerns for getting out?**

'Yeah for sure, I don't have any kids, but enough time has passed where I'm not going to have them. Lost opportunity to have a family.'

**Would you say there are professionals within the system that are willing to help?**

'Already an understanding of how the system works.'

**What was your experience with corrections staff?**

'It was pretty good, I was pretty respectful.'

**Do you think it's more a matter of respect or acting out or is it a matter of issues beyond their control?**

'It's more of a matter of respect.'

**Are officers permitted to speak with you casually?**

'Yellowstone county was an open pod, and we were able to talk casually. You don't have to be professional all the time, there will be an officer that would ask you how you were doing.'

**Would you say that there were certain officers that had more empathy than others?**

'Yes'

**Were there more male or female officers in your facility?**

'70/30 male to female'

**Was your experience with men or women different in any way?**

'Easier with male officers, women more weary being around a bunch of incarcerated men. A lot of guys might not have a good outlook where they are catcalling in jails.'

**How many system professionals that you interacted with were Native or even non-white? For example, judges, attorneys, corrections officers, parole officers, other prison staff?**

'There were Native and Hispanic correctional officers, the majority were white.'

**Is that kind of the same with everything within the legal system, the majority are white?**

'Yes, the majority'

**How many other people did you meet or currently know that have violated parole?**

'A lot. 80% of them at least, they were there for probation or parole violations. Could be higher, but most of them were.'

**Were a lot of those folks for minor infractions such as yourself?**

'Some were, but some had bigger infractions, too'

**Would you say the majority of them are non-white or does the system affect everyone equally?**

'It felt like an even mix to me.'

**So do you think race didn't have anything to do with it?**

'Hispanic or Native Americans were revoked as much as the caucasian guys, but the caucasian guys were able to get out quicker, but the minority guys were in for longer.'

**If you are comfortable sharing, do you have any relatives that have been or are also currently incarcerated and if so, how many?**

'One, my Uncle Frank, he has been incarcerated a lot throughout my life and it's usually alcohol related.'

**Are you happy/satisfied with your interaction and experience with the Innocence Project?**

'Yes, I am very satisfied and I am very glad I was able to work with them.'

**How do you think we can bring more awareness to the prison population about this organization?**

'The first time you go into jail you can read a bulletin for it, but it wasn't there. Maybe if there were flyers available.'

**What other type of stuff is there on the walls?**

'Bondsman stuff, treatment related when you get out, mental health stuff, PREA'

*PREA-Prison Rape Elimination Act*

**How much bail bondsman information is available?**

'Multiple, plus words of mouth.'

**What are some of the benefits that this organization provided to you?**

'They were able to give me help, hope to get my case overturned/exonerated. Just having people believe in you.'

**Do you wish the Montana Innocence Project also helped with reentry?**

'Yes, I do, the time I spent in jail or the system wasn't that long so I still was able to get work.'

**Is that a concern for people that's why they don't reach out for help?**

'Because they are fearful. Talking about plans, they were unhealthy, that would get them thrown right back in but they don't have any other means. I knew the truth, I would sit in my cell and think about it, I hoped someone would find out what really happened.'

**Is there anything else you think we should know when planning the survey for the Montana Women's prison?**

'The way you were arrested. When I first got the accusation, there was a lady, CPS worker, I think, asked me if I had committed the crime, I said no, then they asked if I would talk to the detective, then I could clear this, a lot for the same questions, I didn't do this, I don't know why they would say this, I didn't really know much about the legal system, I talked a lot I didn't know, if I don't hear anything, in a couple months, two months, I don't have to hear anything. Ok, great, two months goes by and I am taking my girlfriend to work and four police cars pull up on me, guns pulled up, they had no reason to arrest me like that. In my mind, I felt like if I had made any more quick movements, I was more or less paralyzed with fear, boxed in by police cars it was in the middle of the street. I would have complied if they asked me to come in, or they could have arrested me at the apartment.'

## Focus Group Dialogue

### **Background:**

*Three members of the research team-Bianca Bostrom, Kristy Halderman, and Spencer Hill, MTIP employee Randi Maddox, and undergraduate student Elysse Conklin along with 18 women incarcerated at Montana Women's Prison in Billings, MT, sat in a circle in the visitor's room to discuss current issues and receive feedback. An armed male officer sat in the back of the room. The team took handwritten notes, but did not have electronic or other recording devices for accuracy. Most of the dialogue was unstructured and consisted of a lot of interjections without knowing the names of the women speaking to properly identify them.*

### **Were there any questions that stood out to you more than any of the others?**

*Inmate: 'Well, the easiest question was, 'how long we have been here.'*

*Inmate: 'We all know down to the second how long we have been here' group laughter*

### **What about other questions like if you feel other inmates will judge you if you apply for the Innocence Project?**

*Inmate: 'Not all the inmates will ridicule you, the staff will, though'*

*Inmate: 'They make comments like, 'oh you are going to see them because you think you're innocent, huh?'*

*Inmate: 'The only reason a lot of us signed up was because it was for a survey.'*

*Inmate: '[They say] because you've been in, you're guilty, but there are still resources that should be accessible to you'*

*Inmate: 'it was tough for me because I have dyslexia'*

### **And the questions about [your] case?**

*Inmate: '[I feel as though] my case was judged much more harshly and my sentence was harsh, too'*

*Inmate: 'A staff member has never helped. [they're] not willing to give, or do, they don't know or are they not permitted?'*

*Inmate: '[we get] no info about legal call, [it's] more word of mouth.'*

### **What resources are currently available to you?**

*Inmate: '[there are] law books [available] from the mid-80s' [side chatter, slight room outrage] [up until] 2014'*

*Randi: 'laws have changed so much since then'*

*Inmate: 'spend resources on other things that we don't need'*

*Inmate: "'mandated classes are outdated, from 2002'*

### **What classes?**

*Inmate: 'OSHA certs, MT DOL, everything'*

*Inmate: 'you have to have someone in the real world if you need any information or stuff gets lost'*

### **How many of you have had things lost in the mail?**

*Every single group member raises their hand. Several women say 'multiple times,' others nod their heads in agreement*

*Inmate: 'It's hard to have faith in stuff that's going to make it'*

*Inmate: 'attorney calls are not private' through something called IC solutions*

*Inmate: 'officers check mail and then write on it'*

### **What do they write?**

*Inmate: 'Pretty much everyone opens your mail and then says, 'oops sorry' on envelope.'*

*Inmate: 'and when you tell them they can't read your mail, they don't like when you assert your rights.'*

*Inmate: 'We only know about this stuff from each other, never an officer.'*

### **How did you know about the Innocence Project?**

*Inmate: 'I only heard about it when I was out on probation'*

### **Where did you hear about it?**

*Inmate: 'Just on the internet'*

*Inmate: 'I saw a flyer'*

*Inmate: 'most[ly] from peers from your pod [that] tell you everything*

### **So, how many people are in a pod?**

*Inmate: '49 plus 5 people to a pod so 53 or 54 people in the bigger ones'*

*Inmate: '38 in smaller pods'*

*Inmate: 'It used to be up to 180 women in here now it's 260'*

### **How many people or beds in a room?**

*Inmate: '1 to 6'*

*Inmate: 'no they got rid of singles'*

*Inmate: 'oh they did, ok, 2 to 6 beds'*

*Inmate: 'I think D&A still have singles'*

*Inmate: 'It's overcrowded now that we got Warm Springs people in here'*

*Randi: 'So what is the best way to get information to you?'*

*Inmate: 'Post flyers or newsletters'*

*Inmate: 'family members could give link for tablet, probably needs to be preapproved'*

*Inmate: There is a notification board by dog boarding and every pod has a bulletin board.*

### **Can you tell us more about the tablets, like do you have access to the internet?**

*Collective laughter*

### **Ok, that seemed like an ignorant question, tell me more about what you do have access to.**

*Inmate: '[Edovo](#) is an educational platform for the jail system, [look up] Bob Pelshaw, [saylor.org](#) classes, the app is Lexus Nexus. [We get the tablets on a ]6-day schedule, no Wednesdays,*

check out every other day, can have all day [then] turn back in. Can order continuing education, religion, [etc.] The men's prisons also go through Edovo.'

*Randi:* 'that's good to know. 'how many of you knew of us from Katie Garding?' *A few raise their hands*

*Randi:* 'ok, if we do this newsletter, what kind of information do you want in it?'

*Inmate:* 'How to apply'

*Inmate:* 'What you can help with'

*Inmate:* 'Criteria'

*Inmate:* 'Legislative updates'

*Inmate:* 'Stories'

*Inmate:* 'Maybe a contact submission form?'

*Inmate:* 'that sends notification through tablets'

*Inmate:* 'What about the application?'

*Inmate:* 'Although, that might have a lot of personal information on it that you don't want out there'

*Inmate:* 'Other organizations that have information on there is the hope project, [angel tree prison fellowship](#)'

*Inmate:* 'Edovo is the only way to email though'

*Inmate:* 'Your person has to pay for that specific email and you can't email them'

*Inmate:* 'It's all about how much money they can make off you, we are just dollar signs'

*Inmate:* 'not everyone knows how to use it, but there's a lot of legal jargon'

*Someone mentions public defenders*

*Inmate:* 'some of them have 100 cases! How are they supposed to represent you?'

**Did a lot of you work with public defenders?** *See some nods, a few raised hands, overall agreement of poor performance.*

*Inmate:* 'If they don't object to anything, there's nothing an appellate lawyer can go off of'

*Inmate:* 'We're not just looking for clemency, but quality of life'

*Randi:* 'Who can we ask to get this on these tablets, we've been working with Officer Mormon'

*Muffled group laughter*

*Inmate:* 'Don't ask him, see if you can contact inmate services or a case manager, Lt. Patterson?'

**Do you have access to video conferencing?**

*Inmate:* 'We can sign up for zoom, tv in waiting room or chapel,'

*Inmate:* 'We've had our parole board from here, you have to sign up to be accepted'

*Inmate:* 'Telephone or video visit with family and it's not zoom, but similar'

*Inmate:* 'You get 2 free visits a week on IC solutions and they are all recorded.'

### **Have you done any other surveys?**

*Inmate:* 'Only ones on chemical dependency and fellowship'

*One woman shares her story:* '[There was a] sentence review with Montana supreme court, but no judgment in my file, so I am just waiting.'

*Inmate:* 'Isn't there post-conviction relief?'

*Inmate:* 'Past prosecutor on case is now judge on my case'

*Inmate:* 'They will try to (explicative) you out of time served, make sure you keep track of you time'

*Inmate:* 'come on you can say the word cheat, you don't have to use that word'

*Inmate:* 'Can I ask if you're Native?'

*Inmate:* 'I am'

*Inmate:* 'You need to get in touch with your Tribe's attorney.'

*Inmate:* 'I don't know, it seems like they are glad that I'm gone'

*Inmate:* 'It's difficult to get an attorney'

*Inmate:* 'We don't even have a phone book!'

*Inmate:* 'We would like a list of how to contact, other organizations, resource list'

*Randi:* 'I wish I had a big resource list for you all, that is something I can try to start working on'

### **Has anyone else tried to get you information?**

'Passages for repeat offenders, Angel Initiative, Rimrock'

### **How do you get information to each other?**

*Inmate:* 'Walking down the halls is like being in high school, if I see someone I am going to try to talk to them'

*Inmate:* 'But we can't eat, workout together nothing'

*Inmate:* 'And we can get a write-up for giving legal advice even if it's just sharing information'

*Inmate:* 'And that knocks out 120 days of good behavior.'

*Another woman shares her story:*

'My judge, Judge Christopher is on paid admin leave in Lake County because she was giving too harsh of judgements. I have the attention of the Yellowstone County News when I get out I am not going to shut up, everyone is going to hear my story.'

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