



## Governor Greg Gianforte | Director Eric Strauss

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July 10, 2026

Members of the Law and Justice Interim Committee,

The Montana Department of Corrections respectfully submits the following information in response to requests made by members of the Law and Justice Interim Committee during its May 7, 2026, meeting. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

### Provide notes and status updates from Tallahatchie contract visits, clarify improvements

#### Compliance assurance structure

- Two full-time monitors assigned to TCCF.
- Between the two monitors, DOC staff are on site at TCCF two weeks every month.
- Additional visits from monitors' supervisor and bureau chief.
- DOC medical staff conducts onsite reviews at least quarterly, performs ongoing compliance audits – last visit was in May.
- DOC professional staff from specialized areas (grievances, classification, and disciplinary services) make frequent onsite visits to support monitors and facility staff.
  - Provide subject-matter expertise, technical assistance, and training to promote ongoing compliance and ensure a consistent understanding of contractual and operational requirements.

#### Compliance evaluation

- **Informal compliance actions:** Occur continuously. Monitors communicate with offenders, observe facility operations, provide ongoing recommendations to TCCF to ensure compliance with contractual obligations.
- **Weekly meetings:** DOC Public Safety management and TCCF management discuss ongoing issues, address new concerns, and identify solutions for areas requiring improvement.
- **Formal compliance monitoring:** Occurs monthly, quarterly, and on an annual basis.
  - **Monthly:** Monitors follow a schedule to ensure all contract sections are regularly evaluated. For example, staffing compliance.
  - **Quarterly:** Monitors and supervisors conduct comprehensive reviews of operations like inmate welfare fund (IWF), food services, and other critical functions.
  - **Annually:** TCCF undergoes a comprehensive annual contract audit guided by correctional auditing tools like the National Institute of Corrections security program audit materials.



- **Noncompliance:** Requires a corrective action plan and ongoing monitoring to ensure full compliance is achieved. Ongoing non-compliance will result in financial withholdings from monthly invoices.

### Improvements based on monitoring recommendations

- Agreement by TCCF to increase the number of FTE to provide treatment to Montana inmates. (Require contractual modifications, but TCCF is moving forward with hiring.)
- Increased law library access for offenders with active and ongoing court cases.
- Weekly inmate access to larger recreational yard.
- Improved inmate access to tablets (requires contract update), increased broadband capacity.
- Updated commissary list will include cultural, religious, and hobby items not readily available in Mississippi.
- Inclusion of property issues in the grievance process.

For an example of a monitoring notes form, see “Restrictive Housing (Special Management)” attachment.

### Provide or explain policy related to communication opportunities for inmates in Tallahatchie.

All inmates at TCCF are provided with access to phone and tablet services in accordance with American Corrections Association standards.

Phone rates are required to be maintained at .06 cents/per minute or less.

Tablets provided to inmates provide equivalent services to those supplied in Montana facilities. Tablets support voice calls, video visits/calls, text messaging, email, and phone messaging.

In addition, Montana inmates are provided with one free phone call, and one free 10-minute video call/visit every week.

### Provide a list of programs and services available at Tallahatchie. How many inmates are accessing them?

See “TCCF progs – Jun2026” attachment.

Programs (overall participation as of 6/30/26)

- ABE 4 – 5
- Carpentry Level 2 (NCCER) – 8
- CORE (NCCER) – 3
- Freedom From Drugs – 8



- Go Further – 10
- Reel Resilience – 8
- Victim Impact - 56

Jobs – About 65% (386 out of 591) Montana inmates at TCCF are working at jobs within the facility.

## What religious offerings are available?

TCCF offers religious services to all religions of inmates with five or more participants, including Christian (non-denominational), Jewish, Rastafari, Wicca, Catholic, Muslim, Asatru, Latter Day Saints, Jehovah's Witness, Native American, and Hebrew Israelite.

Inmates who participate in approved religions with less than five participants at TCCF are allowed to possess associated religious items. Services are provided on a case-by-case basis.

TCCF has a dedicated religious services room and full-time staff.

## What is the percentage of Native American inmates who are housed out of state?

Of the DOC's overall male secure population, 18.4% is being held in Tallahatchie County Correctional Facility in Mississippi.

Of the state's Native American male secure population (22.1% of Montana's overall secure male population), 11.7% is placed at TCCF.

Native Americans comprise 13.5% of the Montana DOC population located at TCCF.

## What data is the DOC tracking related to the effect of out-of-state transfers on recidivism?

The DOC tracks the same data for its out-of-state transfers as it does for all offenders, including the timing of their moves and releases. This allows the tracking of long-term recidivism rates. Because the DOC doesn't have three full years of data from releases related to out-of-state inmates to evaluate, the department is unable to provide standard recidivism metrics.

## Provide most up to date Tallahatchie contract.

Contract (confidential sections removed for security purposes) sent to committee staff on 5/14/26.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Strauss, Director