

# JOIN THE SANTA RITA JAIL HOTLINE



The NLG-SFBA offers a free, confidential hotline for prisoners in Santa Rita Jail and their families to report concerns about jail conditions and obtain information about their rights.

## SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

- Take calls from Santa Rita Jail weekly for a 2-4 hour shift
- Attend monthly Hotline Worker meetings
- Attend optional monthly Hotline Worker support groups
- Collect testimonies from callers who want information shared
- Draft correspondence with prisoners and advocacy letters to public officials and agencies
- Participate in efforts to end incarceration and promote alternatives.

### Fill Out Our Volunteer Form:

[https://nlgsf.ourpowerbase.net/SRJ\\_Hotline\\_Volunteer\\_Form](https://nlgsf.ourpowerbase.net/SRJ_Hotline_Volunteer_Form)

## MONDAY-FRIDAY

Staffed by community members, legal workers, and attorney volunteers who answer calls, advocate for prisoners, and participate in efforts for prisoners' rights and alternatives to incarceration.

**PEOPLE IN SANTA RITA NEED OUR CONTINUED SUPPORT.  
BECOME A HOTLINE WORKER**

## HISTORY

The Santa Rita Jail Hotline emerged out of inside/outside organizing responses to the Oct. 2019 strike inside Santa Rita Jail when 500 prisoners refused meals and work assignments to protest the inedible food, unsanitary and abusive conditions, and a grievance system rigged in the jail's favor. The strike lifted up the existing public health crisis inside Santa Rita and foreshadowed how ill prepared the jail was to handle the coronavirus pandemic.

Since 2020, Hotline Workers have logged nearly 1,000 calls and written hundreds of letters to prisoners. COVID-19 remains a serious issue for incarcerated people, and the jail's population has expanded to nearly pre-pandemic levels. Abuse continues to flourish and the Hotline remains a critical conduit to amplify prisoner voices.

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PEOPLE REGULARLY EXPERIENCE ABUSE AND RETALIATION FROM DEPUTIES WHEN THEY FILE GRIEVANCES, AND NEARLY EVERY GRIEVANCE IS DENIED.

COMMUNITY OVERSIGHT, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH INCARCERATED PEOPLE, IS THE ONLY RECOURSE WE HAVE AGAINST ALAMEDA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE'S (ACSO) CULTURE OF SILENCE, CRUELTY, AND IMPUNITY.

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SANTA RITA JAIL EXPLOITS THE UNPAID LABOR OF PRISONERS FOR FOOD PRODUCTION, FACILITY MAINTENANCE, LAUNDRY, AND TO CLEAN BIOHAZARDOUS MATERIALS FROM CELLS THAT HOUSE PEOPLE INFECTED WITH COVID-19.

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MEDICAL NEGLECT IS A WIDELY-REPORTED ISSUE THAT HAVE BEEN EXACERBATED BY COVID-19.

PRISONERS SUFFERING FROM SERIOUS MEDICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES HAVE BEEN FORCED TO WAIT WEEKS OR MONTHS FOR APPOINTMENTS.

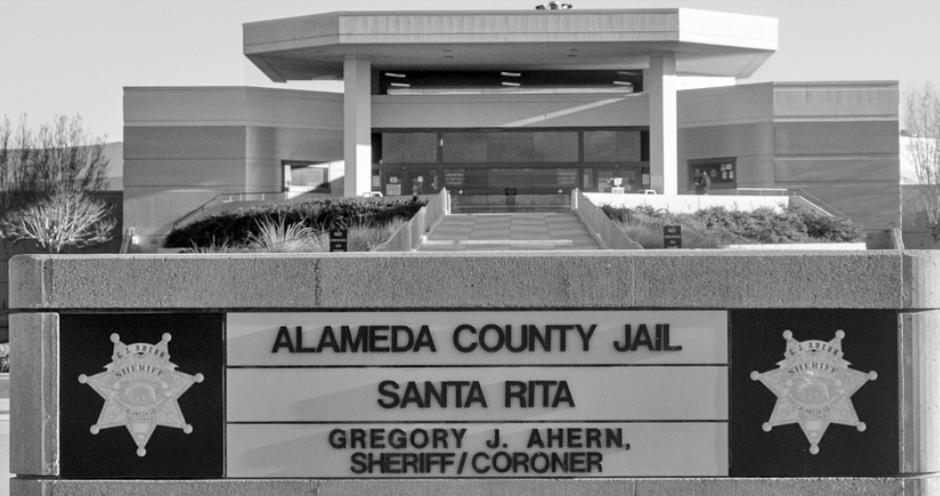
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# SANTA RITA JAIL WEEKLY UPDATE

JULY 19–JULY 25 2021



## STATISTICS AS OF AUGUST 22, 2021

*NOTE: GIVEN THE LOW TESTING RATE, ALL COVID-19 CASE NUMBERS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED UNDERESTIMATIONS*

**2082**

JAIL POPULATION

**644**

TOTAL POSITIVE COVID-19  
TESTS SINCE APRIL

**10**

TOTAL NEW POSITIVE  
COVID-19 TESTS IN PAST WEEK

**18%**

OF JAIL POPULATION  
TESTED IN PAST WEEK

**24.8%**

PERCENTAGE OF INCARCERATED  
POPULATION FULLY VACCINATED\*

**171** <sup>OUT</sup> OF **1000+**

NUMBER OF ASCO STAFF  
TESTED SINCE 8/22/21\*\*

### NOTES ON STATISTICS

\* Vaccination statistics are reported once per week on Fridays.

\*\* On March 1, 2021, the Alameda County Department of Public Health issued [Health Officer Order 21-02](#), which made COVID-19 testing mandatory for ASCO's 1000+ custody staff every 14 days. Testing compliance peaked in May and 1 positive COVID-19 case was discovered. Since then, staff compliance has decreased. The current testing period ends on August 28.

For more complete statistics and COVID-19 quarantines, please visit [bit.ly/SRJCOVID-19](https://bit.ly/SRJCOVID-19).

For information about the Santa Rita Jail Hotline, please contact [srjhotline@nlgsf.org](mailto:srjhotline@nlgsf.org).

For more information about the SRJ Solidarity Weekly Updates and testimony-gathering project, please contact [info@srjsolidarity.org](mailto:info@srjsolidarity.org).



“ I AM A WARRIOR - I WILL STAND POSTED AND TAKE NOTES. DON'T PLAY WITH ME. I WILL BE MY OWN CORRECTIONAL OFFICER. I HAVE MY OWN CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM AND I WILL WRITE YOU GUYS UP TOO. THEY WANT RESPECT - WELL, I DO TOO. I KNOW I HAVE RIGHTS AND I WON'T LET ANYONE TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME.”

- A CALLER IN HOUSING UNIT 24D

## SUMMARY OF HOTLINE CALLS JULY 19 - JULY 25

- Two callers reported **ongoing struggles to access their 2020 Economic Impact Payments.**
- One caller in HU24D reported that she was **denied access to a tablet by multiple deputies**, who taunted her by offering her tablets that were uncharged or had low battery life. This is disturbing not only because prisoners make nonrefundable payments to access movies and music; but because asking for a replacement tablet that is fully charged is documented by deputies as a “refusal,” which portrays the prisoner rather than the Deputy as the problem.
- One caller in HU9 reported that he has been **waiting 5 months to be transferred to a psychiatric hospital.** Delays in these transfers due to COVID-19 are a common concern of Hotline callers. During the August 13 conference call at Santa Rita Jail, ACSO reported that there are 25 individuals with pending commitments to state hospitals.
- One caller in HU2 reported that his **property, including legal and medical paperwork, was confiscated** for exceeding ACSO's weight and size limit for personal property. The SRJ Hotline has been attempting to assist the caller for months to obtain a Property Release Form to release the papers to an outside supporter, but ACSO deputies have consistently refused or delayed providing the form to the prisoner.

## SANTA RITA JAIL FACES LARGEST OUTBREAK SINCE JANUARY!

**Santa Rita Jail is currently experiencing the most severe outbreak of COVID-19 since an outbreak in January 2021 which infected over 100 people.** Since early August, 46 prisoners have been infected with COVID-19. This is orders of magnitude greater than previous months: in June there were 6 infections total; in July, 15. On August 15 alone, active cases increased by 110 percent overnight. As the Delta variant of COVID-19 becomes dominant in California and elsewhere, this outbreak raises serious concerns about the ability of the County, Alameda County Sheriff's Office (ACSO), and Wellpath to contain a virus that has become more readily transmissible. Wellpath has not publicly updated its COVID-19 & flu outbreak plan since February 24, 2021, and County justice partners have no further plans for emergency releases from Santa Rita Jail.

Prisoners' demands for adequate cleaning and sanitary supplies, a consistent demand since well before the pandemic, have yet to be satisfactorily addressed by the jail. ACSO rations the distribution of supplies from locked supply closets inaccessible to incarcerated people. In communiqués to Santa Rita Jail Hotline advocates, ACSO commanders consistently justify the rationing of supplies and claim that individual Deputies don't represent a meaningful obstacle to access. In contrast to these reports, an advocate in Housing Unit 6D recently contacted the Hotline to complain that sanitizing wipes have not been distributed in over one month and that cell cleaning is not



offered regularly – a reminder that Deputies have wide latitude to abuse their power without recourse or accountability. **“Citizens detained here at Santa Rita Jail seek the community’s help on these issues,” the prisoner wrote. “Be our voice. We need help badly.”**

ACSO staff continue to refuse the vaccine. The Alameda County Department of Public Health currently has no plan to mandate that custody staff be vaccinated in order to work in the jail.

## STATEWIDE COVID-19 SAFETY REQUIREMENTS REVISED

At the end of July 2021, the California Department of Public Health issued a requirement for state workers and workers in health care and high-risk congregate settings to either demonstrate proof of full vaccination or be tested at least once per week. **This order, which will apply to Santa Rita Jail, will increase the frequency of ACSO staff testing from once every two weeks to once per week if staff cannot demonstrate proof of vaccination.**

This Monday, August 23 is the deadline for ACSO to reach full compliance with the revised health order. When asked on Friday, August 13 how ACSO will ensure that all staff report their vaccination or testing status to Human Resources, Captain April Lockett-Fahimi responded with only “hope and prayer.”

ACSO’s ongoing failures to comply with health orders are partially a result of its large (1000+) staff. Staff attitudes toward vaccination represent a further barrier toward compliance with the new State-level health order. Currently, **only 77 out of 742 permanent members of custody staff have been vaccinated.** The estimated cost in federal COVID-19 relief funds of biweekly testing is around \$36,000 per month. Now that the obligation to test is twice as frequent, this expenditure could double if

# SANTA RITA JAIL TESTIMONIES

## “THE REAL STORY”: A SANTA RITA JAIL PRISONER’S YOUTH

JUNE 5, 2021 | ERIC WAYNE | CURRENTLY INCARCERATED AT SRJ

I’m a 44-year-old African-American male. I was raised in North Oakland, CA – a low-income and a high-poverty neighborhood. I lived in a household with a single parent – my queen, which is my mom. She raised 5 kids on her own – what a strong queen. My father wasn’t nowhere around in my life – that emptiness of pain in my life was a struggle. Many African-American kids grow up with similar or same pain as me.

“I’m a 44-year-old African-American male. I was raised in North Oakland, CA—a low-income and a high-poverty neighborhood. I lived in a household with a single parent —my queen, which is my mom. She raised 5 kids on her own—what a strong queen. My father wasn’t nowhere around in my life—that emptiness of pain in my life was a struggle. Many African-American kids grow up with similar or same pain as me.

I tried to create my own path of life as a kid. I hustled in my neighborhood by cutting people’s lawns, washing cars, it also lessened the pressure on my mom. All the way till something dramatic took place in my life. I was pushed in a swimming pool by an older white adult. I didn’t know how to swim at all, so I drowned and I was pronounced dead by being under the water for approximately 12-and-a-half minutes. Somebody pulled me out of the pool and placed a yellow tarp over my body, until a white lady chose to give me mouth-to-mouth for over 5 minutes – giving me a pulse and giving me a chance to a second life.

I stayed in the hospital for weeks hooked up to tubes, then I was released from the hospital. I had to attend lots of learning therapy for years. I was considered a special education kid

that rode the yellow bus and needed special attention from teachers. Somehow I never progressed and I became rageful and full of anger. I did a lot of stuff to seek attention growing up – I was a dare you kid.

But remember, my pain level was high growing up. I met my father at the age of 17 for the first time. I was confused, happy, angry, & hurt – all in one. I didn’t accept his apology at all, and me and him never got along. That’s only the portion of my pain I suffered, the rest of my story has to be shared in person.

African-American kids suffer from the same pain nationwide – most of that pain is:

- Locked up
- Dead
- Homeless
- Prostitutes
- Alcoholics
- On drugs
- Gang members
- Criminals and more.

How many people know that but refuse to create a healing process? People would rather make money off of painful people and painful situations than help us. Look around you, then you’ll understand what I see daily.