



The Illinois Coalition for Higher
Education in Prison

Join IL-CHEP in getting much-needed hand sanitizer into Illinois prisons!

How can I support?

You can find a donation link [here](#).

Why is the Illinois Coalition for Higher Ed in Prison working to supply sanitizer?

We are a coalition of college in prison programs and allied organizations that serve the incarcerated population in Illinois. We care about the well-being of our students and the people in Illinois' prisons. As COVID-19 is rapidly spreading throughout our communities, we fear for the time when the virus makes it behind bars. We hope that every individual inside is able to protect themselves to the greatest extent possible. The provision of hand sanitizer for people living and working in our prisons will help quell the spread of the virus in a place where contagion typically thrives. We want to help as practically as we can.

How do contagious viruses spread throughout prisons?

Quickly.

Prisons keep people in close quarters and are overcrowded (according to IDOC's official numbers). Cleaning supplies are not easily accessible by incarcerated people. They also lack easy access to soap and water and are limited in the number of showers they can take. They are sometimes chained to other people. According to an [article from WBEZ](#), "Health experts say the Illinois prisons are at risk of a coronavirus outbreak because of the crowded and unsanitary conditions, and because of an aging population. Nineteen percent of the IDOC population is 50 years of age or older."

If a prison is overcome by the virus, how would it impact broader society?

The Illinois Department of Corrections' healthcare system is understaffed and fails to meet the medical needs of people within the prison system, under normal conditions. If COVID-19 makes it inside, prison healthcare systems would quickly be overwhelmed. Those requiring medical attention would likely be sent to outside hospitals. We expect that these hospitals will also be over-run with other members of the community, including the prison staff who will also be exposed to the virus and at risk of exposing their families. Keeping the people who live and work in prisons safe is an ESSENTIAL part of flattening the curve.

Are there any other groups doing this kind of work?

Yes. You can find links to many of their efforts [here](#).

Who do I contact for more information?

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